

# The Light Within



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## Chapter one

Severus just made the biggest mistake ever. He lost his only and best friend by simply saying one word, one word had ruined it all. The one person who truly cared for Severus was ignoring him for the past week and she even refused to make eye contact with him. Lily Evans. He tried to talk to her about it and he apologized a million times but she wouldn't forgive him. Her exact last words Lily said to Severus were: "Sev, I can't just forgive you for this. I'm sorry."

Severus was alone now that he lost her. On top of the wound, James started dating Lily while he knew that Severus was head to toe over her. He never dared to say it out loud to her but it was very obvious to everyone, especially to the "Marauders". He hated that name and thought it was childish and they even had nicknames for each other.

How pathetic he snorted. James didn't deserve Lily's love and Black and Lupin didn't deserve her friendship either.

Don't even get him started about that moron named Pettigrew. They have never been nice to Severus so how could Lily do this to him?!

The cold breeze made Severus shiver but he still managed to hold his head up and embrace the cold. It was peaceful, it always was. He came here, up the Astronomy Tower, almost every day after curfew after the incident with Lily. Severus would just stare at the stars and the moon.

Sometimes when it was a full moon, he heard the werewolf and secretly deep down he hoped Lupin was going to be okay. It must be hard on him to be like that, Severus must admit. No, he shouldn't think about Lupin right now! He was his enemy even though mostly, Lupin didn't do anything but that was the problem: that he didn't do anything.

He didn't bully Severus like Potter and Black would but he did watch, watch him being humiliated in front of the whole bloody school.

Severus looked at the clear, black sky and it was beautiful like this. He always adored nighttime and even preferred it over the daytime. It felt like all his worries disappeared into thin air and every single one of his responsibilities vanished with it as well. The pressure to keep his status and grades high. Severus needed to get the best grades he could possibly get even though it meant having no free time. Of course, he did enjoy it but it wasn't the way he wanted to study.

He wanted to prove his father wrong about being worthless and useless. That's why his father did the things he did to him because the words Severus had been called were true. No matter how hard Severus tried to convince himself his father was wrong, the more he started to believe that it was true.

Nobody was here to rescue Severus now. Dumbledore may have been the closest thing to a father figure and he didn't want to let him down, but Severus was exhausted and drained. Dumbledore was the one who saved him last time when he tried to drown himself in the black lake.

Severus saw the hurt in Dumbledore's eyes when he was pulled out of the freezing lake and regretted his actions immediately. He had let him down and now, Dumbledore will see him as weak and that was the last thing Severus wanted: Pity. That's why he hid his secrets from everybody else. Severus didn't need a person to "fix" him because he wasn't broken.

His hands leaned on the railing, supporting his body that was hanging half over it. Severus' eyes

glanced down to see how high it exactly was because he didn't want to survive the fall. He could already imagine it:

Severus lay in a twisted position on the ground and unable to move. Waiting for someone to find him and when he was found, they just laughed at him. Laughing because he was a coward and even failed to commit suicide. Severus would lay still on the cold surface and incapable of protecting himself and getting out of the situation.

There was a small chance for him to actually survive and Severus was hopeless right now. This had to do. Even if he did survive, he would just try to kill himself after he would be released from the hospital wing. It didn't matter anymore. Nothing mattered.

Remus-

He was tossing and turning in his Gryffindor bed, trying to find a good position to fall asleep in. He groaned in frustration after about half an hour endlessly staring at the ceiling, now mesmerizing every single stripe the paint had made.

Remus had trouble sleeping for as long as he could remember. There were so many things in his mind the second his eyes closed. They were all hectically running around in his head, digging up the smallest awkward conversations he had in his life. Some were actually a bit funny but not something Remus wanted to relive.

He peeked his head up, gazing at his best friends. Even though they were a bloody pain in the ass sometimes, he still loved them like family. Remus and Sirius were the closest with each other and that was something that didn't go unnoticed by the group. James teased them occasionally about what a great couple they would make. Remus wanted to punch James in the face when he crossed the line with teasing. Sirius rolled his eyes at him and ignored it, knowing they would and could never be more than best friends.

Sirius was straight and made that very pronounced. He couldn't even be bi-curious. Remus on the other hand has struggled with his feelings towards people that weren't girls. Did he feel guilty about it? Yes, he did.

Remus knew that his friends would approve of it and it was more that he had problems with it himself. He always assumed that he would get married and have children with his wife.

Peter snoring loudly was definitely not helping Remus get to sleep. His eyes landed on the Marauders map next to him. Remus' curiosity took over to see if anyone would still wander around the school at this time and he opened the map.

His eyebrows furrowed when he saw someone at the Astronomy tower. Remus wasn't really surprised to see Severus there. The map was placed on the nightstand next to him again but he couldn't stop wondering what Severus would do there at this hour.

He sighed and stressed about his enemy. It wasn't like he hated him. It was more than James, Sirius and Peter didn't like him and started bullying in their first year already. Naturally, Remus just went with it because after all they were his friends and it would be weird to do something about it even though he always felt guilty after they pulled another prank on the poor Severus. He must admit, Severus certainly wasn't the most handsome guy in the school and he may not have the rich life he had, but he didn't deserve this.

Everybody knew about Severus' home life. Well, not that Severus himself had spoken about it but there were thousands of rumours. Some people have seen his back or other parts of his body that sometimes slipped out of his robes.

They say he has an awful amount of scars everywhere. Some were consistent while others were all over the place. One of the bigger rumours was that he was doing himself harm but nobody bothered enough to actually ask if he was okay.

Remus was growing more tempted through the years to get to know Snape more. He was an interesting and special human with his obsession for Dark Arts. He also had a lot of questions about why Severus acted the way he did, always sarcastic and sneering when someone tried to talk to him. Maybe it was a defence mechanism and something to keep people away from him.

Severus was positively not a social person. In fact, you could say he detested people and any sort of affection. He hated being the centre of attention, whether it would be good or bad attention didn't even matter.

Remus grabbed the map for the second time this night. His eyes found the Astronomy Tower and Severus were still standing there. Bloody hell, Remus worries increased by the second. He had to go there, now.

He slipped in a pair of warmer clothes and pulled his cloak over his shoulders, heading to the tower.

## Chapter two

Walking up the stairs took long enough and by the time Remus was on the last step, he was out of breath. He stood there quietly and took some air in his lungs, calming himself down before taking the last step. Preparing himself for what snarky comments he will get from Snape for being there. Maybe Severus was just enjoying the view and silence. Then Remus would be terribly wrong about the intentions he thought Snape would have.

Remus saw Severus, leaning over the ledge. He was shivering a bit and Remus noticed the cloak that was missing on his lean body. Did Severus really think it was a good idea to stand here in the cold at night without a cloak for hours!?

Snape didn't know that he was being observed by his new company and climbed over the railing. He wasn't a climber and even though it wasn't that high, he still had trouble. One leg was already over it before he heard a voice behind him that made him jump.

"Snape? What are you doing?" He recognized the voice and turned his head to look straight in the brown, amber eyes from Lupin. He swore under his breath so that it was impossible for Lupin to hear it. Of all moments Lupin could walk in, this was the moment?

The look in Remus' eyes worried the Slytherin. He couldn't be concerned right? That was unimaginable. Severus however, saw no reason Remus could stop him and swung his other leg over it, now sitting on the edge.

"Sna- Severus, whatever you think you're doing, we can talk about it. I'm here for you. Please?" He looked pleading and nervous. Severus was doubting, what if this was another prank and James, Sirius and Peter were waiting around the corner for him? Severus stopped moving and his breath hitched. What was he going to do....?

"Look, I know we might have our differences but you're not alone and this isn't't the only way out. It may look like it is, but it's not. Please come off and talk to me?" Maybe Remus wasn't lying but Severus still hesitated because this was his chance. His chance to finally be free and happy.

"You think I believe that Lupin?" Severus sneered at the young man. Remus didn't know what to do and took a step closer to him. He said his name extra slowly to let Remus know that he can't call him by his front name. The situation they were currently in didn't change the dynamic that was between them.

"Don't come closer or I'll jump," Severus threatened. He took a step back again without breaking eye contact with the boy on the railing that could be dead any second.

"Why do you care anyway? We have never been friends before. Better said, we are enemies of Lupin. Go away and mind your own damn business." The voice became more strict and harder. Remus suppressed the need to run towards the lonely Slytherin and hug him until he couldn't breathe anymore. That wasn't the smartest idea though because it would give Severus a chance to genuinely jump.

"Please," he continued begging.

"No! I'm done with this. I'm done with everyone. Do you know how it feels to have nobody in your life to care for you? Do you?" Severus was furious at this point, "I have nothing. I lost everyone and everything." It almost sounded like Snape was the one who begged at the moment. Begging for Lupin to go away and let him be free. It sounded desperate under the tone of anger.

"You are cared for Severus. I care." He had gone back to his first name again but this time, Severus couldn't dwell on it because he had other things to think about.

"You don't care so stop pretending!" His voice cracked in the middle and his vision became blurry from holding back the tears that were gonna fall any second.

"I do. Please, Severus." Tears were now rolling down his cheeks and Remus was surprised to see this. Never in his entire life had he known him had he cried. Not even when he got attacked in the Shrieking Shack Sirius had led him into.

"Let me be happy." It was now softer and nearly a whisper. Severus' body began moving and this was the cue for Remus to run towards the boy.

Severus closed his eyes, waiting for his body to hit the cold, hard stone on the surface. Yet, the smack never hit him. Remus' hand wrapped around the thin wrist to pull him back. They both fell down with a loud sound. Remus felt something falling on top of him that made him groan in pain. They laid still for a second before Severus wanted to stand up but Remus didn't let go of the wrist and only tightened it.

"Why Lupin!" Severus was on his knees next to Remus who quickly sat straight up. He saw that Severus wanted to leave but was unable to by the hand that was still clasped around his arm with a hard force.

"Why did you stop me? Why did you have to ruin my plans just like you ruin everything else in my life?" he cried out. He started thrashing around to remove himself from the strong man's grip but failed. For the first time, Severus had let his mask down. The emotions were as visible as they could be and his eyes were red and puffy from the crying. Never had Remus thought he would see Severus this vulnerable. He didn't respond to the question Severus asked and he thought that it wasn't really a question either. He pulled Severus in his chest and Remus' arms crept around the small waist. Remus could feel the bones of his ribs from the lack of eating and laid his head against the wall.

Severus struggled to get out of his grip but he refused to let go. Instead, Remus shrugged his cloak from his shoulders and gently laid it on top of the shivering body. He felt him relaxing a bit but he was still very tense under Remus' touch.

Severus felt a hand on his head that was directed towards Remus' chest. His cheek was flat against the hard, warm body. He was curled up into a foetus position with Remus' arms around him and his face buried in the clothes, unable to look at the man that was holding him.

Remus heard the Slytherin sobbing and choking a bit on his own saliva. He rocked him in his arms and hummed a song softly. In the meantime, Severus stopped trying to draw away from the warm body pressed against his, knowing it was pointless.

He would never admit it out loud but he relished having his body in his arms. It was a cute sight too: Severus with puffy eyes, red cheeks and face buried into Remus' robes. He sucked the outside air in his lungs before letting it out in a long puff before giving the man in his arms a small kiss on the forehead that had already passed out from exhaustion.

## Chapter three

Remus grunted when the sunshine nearly blinded him. For a second, he wondered why he was at the Astronomy Tower before all the memories flooded back. Snape sitting on the railing wanting to jump, Remus pulled him back and then snuggled him in his arms. Remus rubbed his eyes. Did that really happen last night or was it just a dream? He noticed the warm presence he felt last night gone.

Remus was alone which made him question whether he had slept and walked all the way up the stairs. But the bruises that pained him told something else.

"Moony! Where have you been, mate?" James, Peter and Sirius all looked at the worn-out Remus standing in front of them. His hair had thousands of knots in it, he had bags under his eyes and the clothing looked like it went through the fire.

"Nothing special." He sat down while Sirius and James exchanged a quick look but they didn't ask anything about it. He glanced at the Slytherin table, eyes trying to find the person who sobbed his heart out last night. The person who he could have lost if Remus didn't go to the tower. He couldn't even think about what might have happened if he decided to go to sleep instead of to Severus.

Severus had his eyes fixed on the plate in front of himself. It had a piece of buttered toast in front of him but he felt sick looking at it and shoved it away from him. He felt eyes burning in his back and turned around to stare right in the beautiful brown eyes Lupin had. He had woken up in his arms and made a run for it, not wanting to talk about what had happened even though Severus knew he should.

Remus gave him a concerning smile and then joined the conversation James, Sirius and Peter had. This was going to be a hard day.

Severus left before breakfast ended to avoid Remus. Luckily he had Potions and Slughorn always allowed Severus to come earlier than the actual lesson. He was even luckier that Remus didn't have potions with him.

He made his way down the dungeon and the temperature fell with each step that led him farther to the potions room. Severus knocked on the door and didn't hear an answer so he took the change and walked into the room. There was no sign of Slughorn, that probably meant he was still at breakfast in the Great Hall. He sighed before dragging his feet over the ground and sitting himself in a chair. He searched in his bag for Advanced Potion Making, to read it again even though Severus knew every single sentence written in the book.

There were scribbles on all of the pages, correcting the mistakes the people made while writing the book. How can they be so foolish, making these kinds of mistakes?

The first Ravenclaws came in and Severus didn't bother to look up. He did, however, heard them snicker and he immediately knew it was about him. He wasn't an imbecile and knew about the rumours that spread around the school like wildfire.

Most of them weren't true, such as him never washing his hair. Innocent stuff like that. The big ones were mostly accurate which made Severus tense up thinking about it, knowing his secrets were out. Nobody bothered enough to check in with him. After all, they were rumours and some assume they are just made up by some people. Or maybe they didn't care enough to even ask. It didn't disturb Severus that nobody really asked. He would rather be alone and never talk about such

things.

Dumbledore was the only one who actually knew everything about the Slytherin. It wasn't like he told him, it was more that Dumbledore figured it out himself. That night at the black lake, Dumbledore found out about his suicidal thoughts and his addiction to cutting.

Of course, he already knew about his home situation. He got sent to the hospital wing after his attempt and he was held there for about two weeks. It was torture but Dumbledore kept saying he needed it and that it was good for him.

He convinced the older man to let him go and that he wasn't going to pull a stunt like that anymore. Madam Pomfrey argued with Dumbledore outside the room and Severus heard everything:

"We can't let him go, Albus. The boy is suicidal and I highly doubt he had stopped his addiction. He is a Slytherin after all." Severus grinned at the last sentence and continued listening, hoping Dumbledore could influence Madam Pomfrey.

"We can't keep him here forever. He has classes to attend and we don't want students to get suspicious," It was funny how Dumbledore kept thinking people cared about Severus. Students wouldn't get suspicious about the sudden disappearance. In fact, they wouldn't even notice he would be gone. "I'll keep an eye on him okay? And we will continue the appointments between Severus and the Mindhealer. Once a week."

He didn't tell the Mindhealer much. Severus didn't trust the man and was afraid that if he would spill his thoughts and feelings, he would be sent to St. Mungo. Dumbledore promised that they wouldn't take Severus there but he had his seconds thoughts about it. The headmaster had lied about multiple things throughout his stay at Hogwarts. Bastard, Severus thought. The voice connected to Slughorn interrupted his train of thoughts.

"Dreamless Sleep. This name must be familiar to you?" Severus snorted in himself. He knew exactly what the potion for Dreamless Sleep was. He had made it so many times that he could do it blindly. It helped him scare away the nightmares Severus tended to have. If he didn't take it, he would wake up his roommates in the middle of the night by screaming and turning in his bed.

Severus' roommates never asked why it happened. They only got mad at him for disturbing their sleep. The nightmares were mostly about his father. About how he told Severus how useless he was every day and showed it by beating him with whatever he had. Mostly it was the belt, but sometimes Tobias would improvise if he didn't have the belt. The memories made him shiver.

The ingredients were already on each table. They had a theory about the potion yesterday and today they had to make it. Most people will fail to make it correctly but Severus never did. He didn't need to look in his book for directions and got started with cutting the flobberworm.

## Chapter four

Potions went successful. Although Severus got in trouble for arguing with Slughorn. He told Slughorn that you had to crush it and not cut it like the book said. Slughorn always followed the book but Severus knew better, the book had so much misinformation. He was on his way to his next class: Transfiguration. It wasn't one of Severus' favourites but luckily, it wasn't really hard for him. He sighed when he remembered this class was with Gryffindor.

Remus saw Severus walk into the class. He was sitting with his friends in the back of the class like always. James and Sirius never paid attention while Remus was the one who always tried his best to follow it. Peter mostly daydreamed during classes and this class was no exception.

Transfiguration was something he had trouble with and he struggled with it most of the time. Defence Against the Dark Arts was also a challenge for Remus. He had considered asking Snape multiple times to tutor him. It wasn't the best idea but he knew about his obsession with it and he wasn't going to lie, he was good as well. But the Marauders will laugh at them and tease them about it. Moony wouldn't care but knew that Severus would get extra hard treatment from them.

Severus sat down, eyes never leaving the ground and head hanging low. It was just the way he walked. He probably did that to attract as little attention as he could and Remus couldn't blame him. His posture was terrible and he had no doubts that Severus would feel this in his twenties if he kept this up.

"Snivellus! Take a shower, I can see the grease from here." James laughed and motioned to Sirius. Lily would normally stick up for Severus and say something about it to James. But this time, she kept quiet. It pained him. Remus saw Severus tightening up a bit by the raise of his shoulders, before letting them fall again. He never knew how he could ignore the bastards he was friends with.

"Settle down," the voice from McGonagall interrupted. She gave a quick glare at the boys in the back to warn them.

The class went smoothly except for the mess Sirius and James made. Severus rolled his eyes. They always acted like they were higher than the rest. They were not and it seemed like nobody even noticed this. The Marauders got away with everything just because they were Dumbledore favourites. It was pretty obvious for Severus but again, no one sees the small details in the bigger picture.

Remus fast-walked to Severus who was walking through the corridors to lunch. Remus made a quick excuse to his friends, saying he had to go to the bathroom.

"Snape! Hold up." Severus however, recognized the voice from Lupin and started walking even faster than he did before. It practically went at a running pace at this point. Remus furrowed his brows but let it slip. This was Snape they were talking about after all. He finally made his way through the crowd of students and walked next to Severus.

"What do you want Lupin," he said annoyed. Why didn't he leave him alone? Severus didn't really expect Remus to socialize with him after that night. He was alive and that was why Lupin said those things right? He just didn't want to deal with the guilt if Severus died. At Least, that's what he thought but Remus had other things in mind. He seemed to care for this boy and started to see him less as Snivellus and more as a genius.

An attractive, yet difficult man. He was fascinated by Severus and wanted to spend more time with

him and also talk about why he had the urge to kill himself. Remus could have guessed why but he still needed to hear it coming out of Severus' mouth because he didn't want to jump to conclusions.

"About....last night," he started hesitantly. Severus sighed and even though Remus couldn't see his face by the black curtain of hair, he had the feeling he was also rolling his eyes at him. Remus smirked at the thought of it. It was cute.

"Drop it. You saved my life, are you happy now? That was the point of it, wasn't it? Saving me so you don't have to live with the guilt." Remus gasped. Was this really what Severus was thinking? He couldn't blame the man for thinking this because they aren't friends and never had an actual normal conversation. It still upset Remus to know Severus thought he only did it because he pitied him. He knew how much Severus hated people pitying him.

"It's not like that-" he wanted to say more but was cut off: "Save your excuses. I don't need to hear them." Snape picked up his pace again and headed to the Great Hall even though he barely ate. Lucius spotted Severus sitting at the Slytherin table and sat next to him.

"And?" Severus nearly choked on his pumpkin juice. Lucius had his hand on the back of Severus and patted it gently. He winked at him before pointing at Remus. Severus was annoyed that nothing could go past Lucius.

"What?" he sneered.

"I saw you walking with Remus." Severus had the need to punch him in the face after Lucius said that. It wasn't any of his business.

"So?" Lucius glared at him. He saw the way Severus looked at Remus and there was definitely more to the story. Lucius had his suspicions about Severus' sexuality since 3rd year. He was in denial and that was clear to see. But now, something has changed. Severus was still looking at Remus with the: I-fancy-you look but there was something else he was hiding.

"Stop denying," he smirked before turning his head and starting a conversation with the Slytherin on the other side. Severus had no idea what he was talking about and what Lucius meant with his actions and words. He hadn't figured out about the Astronomy Tower, did he?

Severus was going to the library. It was one of his favourite spots. Normally he would go to the tree but the incident with Lily took place there and he couldn't stand to be there. He walked into the library and to his luck, he spotted Lily. She was alone and this was the perfect opportunity to talk to her without James in his neck.

"Lily. Can I talk to you?" She looked up from her homework and narrowed her eyes.

"No," she simply answered. Severus didn't expect this answer and kept standing in front of her, not knowing what to do. She sighed and closed her book.

"What do you want, Sev?" His face lit up a bit after she called him Sev. It was the nickname she used before the fight.

"I wanted to apologize for....for calling you that word." Lily saw this coming already and said nothing. She couldn't just forgive him after what had happened. She tried to help him and instead she got that awful word back.

"I don't accept your apology. Now if you'll excuse me," she got up from her seat and packed her bags. She didn't even turn her head when she walked out. Severus had no other choice but to run after her.

"Lily, wait." He grabbed her arm but she yanked it from his grip. Some students looked in their direction to see what it was all about.

"No!"

They took a turn in the corridor and met Sirius and Remus. Lily rushed over to them and stood behind them like they were going to protect her from Severus.

"Snivy. Looks like she doesn't want to talk to ya," Sirius smirked. Remus blinked a few times to process the situation in his mind.

"But-" He got cut off by Sirius who grabbed his wand out of his robe and pointed it at him. Remus was freezing up and it felt like he couldn't move. In the meantime, Lily had made a run for it and was probably looking for James. Severus quickly gripped his own wand tight in his hand but before he could even pull it out of his robes completely, Sirius said: "Expelliarmus."

The wand flew out of Severus' hand which left him unarmed. Sirius pushed him at the wall with the strength of his body, pointing the wand in his neck and gripping his hair. Severus looked scared and tried to fight back but he didn't have much body strength in comparison with Black.

"If you ever-" he wanted to continue but got pulled back by someone. Severus frowned and looked over Black's shoulder to see who stood up for him

"Padfoot. Let's go." It was Remus. Sirius wanted to say something back but Remus slurred him. Severus was still standing against the wall, shocked by the actions Remus pulled. A few students were still staring at the scene that just took place and Severus wanted to die of humiliation. He found his wand on the floor and placed it back in his robes. What was happening?

## Chapter five

"Moony, what was that all about?" Sirius grunted when he got pulled away from Severus.

"I was about to let him meet my fist," Remus couldn't help but laugh a bit at this comment. They didn't have any classes for the day and the friend group settled down in the common room in front of the fire for homework. Well, at least Remus was doing his assignments. James and Sirius were joking around while Peter just pretended to study but he could see the porn magazine hidden behind the book in front of his face. Peter adjusted his sitting position, probably trying to hide the growing erection.

"Just give him a break alright?" James stopped laughing and looked at Remus through split eyes.

"Give him a break? C'mon he deserves it all." Remus didn't know what to say because of course, he didn't want to get into a fight with his best friends.

"Are you seriously defending him?" Sirius added to the statement James already made. Remus rolled his eyes at them but decided not to argue with them any further.

"Whatever guys. I'm going to take a nap." He stood up from the couch and gathered his stuff for Herbology. He walked in his room that was currently empty. He sighed and tossed his stuff on the bed. The school could really be exhausting if you didn't try your best. He gave his owl a pet on his head which gave him an idea. Severus didn't want to talk to him but maybe if he wrote a letter, he may accept his request. He found some parchment and a quill.

**Snape**

I know you don't want to talk about what happened. If you change your mind then meet me at the Astronomy Tower after curfew. Please think about it.

(Don't worry I'll come alone. Promise)

Remus Lupin

He wanted to use Snape's front name but decided to play in the safe field. He didn't want him to get angry and not show up. Remus hesitated for a while before tying the letter to the owl and sending him to Snape, hoping for the best.

Severus was devastated by what had happened but at the same time, he felt happy. Happy that Remus finally got the courage to stand up for Severus. He still had his doubts about Lupin because he can't just forget the 6 years of bullying and Remus who just watched. He sighed and closed his eyes while turning on his back on the bed. He still wanted to end everything even after he was saved by Lupin. He had convinced himself that it must have been a sign but deep down he knew it was just pointless. His entire life revolves around literally nothing. He had no idea what he wanted to do after school because he simply didn't see a future for himself.

The only thing that could make Severus smile was thinking about death. About being free from all worries, responsibilities, bullying, everything. It felt like he was stuck in this bottomless hole. The days melted in weeks and in months but nothing changed. It felt like he was in some kind of everyday routine and like he was on autopilot: Standing up, school, eating and sleeping. No matter what he did, it was always the same.

Nothing could give him excitement and he wasn't looking forward to something like he used to.

Better said....he felt empty. Like someone cut in his stomach and took away his organs. He gave

up trying to stand up for himself, winning Lily over and getting good grades. What if he decided to keep on living? What could possibly be there for him?

Severus searched for the thing that released him from all the stress. He had promised himself and Dumbledore to stop. Dumbledore already thought he stopped but he never actually did. Well, he tried but always relapsed sooner or later. Severus never knew why it was such a big deal for people. It wasn't like he was going to die from it and not that someone cares if he was. Dumbledore acted like he cared but Severus knew that he only used him for his own gain.

He pulled open one of the drawers and found the small bag. He left his room to find a bathroom because he didn't want to be disturbed by anyone. Severus locked the door and opened the zipper of the bag, carefully grabbing the razorblade. He sighed when he looked at it. He knew that this was wrong and not the right choice but it didn't matter at the moment. Not right now.

Those were not his worries and Severus will keep pushing them away until he can't anymore. Severus lowered himself onto the ground with his back against the cold wall and his legs pushed against his belly. It made him feel safe.

His hand was shaking while he brought it closer to the pale skin on his wrist. His vision was blurry by the tears he was holding back. Snape refused to let the tears free because his father said it made you weak and boys aren't supposed to cry.

Deep down, he also knew that cutting was weak but it was an exception for him because he can't live without it. It was the only way to find the release of all the stress and feelings hidden inside him that was pushed down.

The shaky hand with the blade between two fingers made its way in his skin. He dragged it across the flesh a few times and after a while, his whole left arm was filled with red cuts. The red liquid started dripping and the skin was burning and getting red around the wounds. These were deeper than normal and Severus had to take extra care of them. He didn't want to end up in the hospital wing and explaining himself to Madam Pomfrey.

Severus had done this so many times, his left wrist was becoming numb from the pain. He didn't feel as much as he used to and it scared him a bit. What if it became completely numb and then he won't feel the pain he needed anymore. He would have to go to other body parts but that's something he didn't want to do.

He felt alone and hopeless. Nobody was looking for him and nobody cared. He is unworthy of love and would never be capable of loving someone else. He isn't going to be successful in life and he is going to die alone with no purpose.

Not a single person could love this hideous monster. The snarky, unpopular and unattractive Slytherin. Severus wanted nothing more than to end his life. He got up from his position and muttered a spell to clean himself and the bathroom tiles off. He took a deep breath before walking out. An owl tapping on the window in his dormitory grabbed his attention. He opened the window to let the unfamiliar owl in.

"Hi little guy," Severus said while ignoring the painful burns from his wrist. The owl stuck out his leg to show the little note attached to it.

Snape

I know you don't want to talk about what happened. If you change your mind then meet me at the Astronomy Tower after curfew. Please think about it.

(Don't worry I'll come alone. Promise)

Remus Lupin

Severus sighed, not knowing if Lupin was serious about this. Snape wanted to go but a small part of his brain said it was a trick. Lupin will meet there with him and the moment Severus is in a vulnerable spot, James, Sirius and Peter would come out of the shadows and teach him a lesson Sirius wanted to show when he ran after Lily.

On the other hand, Severus had nothing left to lose. If lupin was going to prank him, it would be their last anyway.

Severus wrote a quick note back, not really taking the effort to even write his name. A simple: See you then would be enough. He watched as the owl flew back out of the window it came in and he closed it. Severus noticed how tired he was and took a sleeping draught potion from his collection hidden from the rest. He carefully examined it before taking the top off and downing it in his throat. He had made it himself in the potions classroom and Slughorn even congratulated him for making it so perfect.

The sleep took over faster than he thought and before he knew it, Severus blacked out.

## Chapter six

Remus looked down at the clock in the Gryffindor Common room. It was going to be a challenge to convince his friends he was going to the toilet. Especially because it was almost curfew which would make them easily suspicious.

"I'm going to the toilet. I'll be right back." They didn't answer but Sirius gave a nod before returning to his conversation. They won't notice i'm gone he thought.

He had gotten a reply from Severus that he would come but Remus wasn't 100% sure if he would actually show up. He got to his destination and no one else was there yet. He walked over to the place Severus almost died and looked at the stars. The full moon would come soon and it worried him.

He never truly apologized to Snape after it happened even though it wasn't really his fault. Remus had no idea that Sirius had planned it and of course, he had no control over his own body which made him feel even worse about himself. A monster, Snape called him after that. He couldn't agree with him more. Dumbledore made sure the boy kept quiet about it but he saw that Severus had trouble with it.

The night was warmer than the last time and Remus silently thanked the universe for it. He was freezing then, even with the cloak before he gave it to Severus.

Severus saw Remus standing at the spot he stood earlier that week. He was focusing on the stars and clearly didn't realize he had come. Severus looked around, trying to spot his friends but when he didn't see anything, he slowly walked towards the boy. Severus wasn't good at being social and small talk so decided to keep his mouth shut. He leaned his arms on the railing and followed the gaze from Remus to the stars.

Remus just looked at him, confused and happy at the same time. He didn't really think he would show up but he did and was grateful for it. He noticed how tired Severus looked. More tired than at the beginning of the day. His hair was ruffled up a bit instead of his normal sleek hair and he had visible eyebags.

Remus doubted that Severus ever had a decent night. However, he didn't comment on it knowing how self-conscious Severus was about himself. That didn't go unnoticed by Remus and most people wouldn't notice his insecurities either.

It's like he builds their walls around him that won't let anyone in, to protect himself. Remus hoped he could be the one for him to lower those walls and let more people in but knew that would be a hard task.

Severus ran his hand through his hair and Remus wished he was the one to do that. It seemed greasy but that was only from all of the potion fumes because, at the beginning of the day, it would always be shiny and soft.

"So....," he broke the silence hesitantly and tried to find the right words to say without scaring him away. Severus clicked his tongue but remained quiet because he didn't know what to say. He felt a bit uncomfortable and Remus noticed it by the way he shifted on his feet. This wasn't going to work if he kept feeling uncomfortable so he took the change and did the unforgivable: he hugged him from behind.

Remus' arms sneaked to the front around his thin waist and his head on his shoulder, staring at the stars together. He tensed up just like always but when he noticed Remus wasn't doing anything to harm him, he dropped his shoulders and let out a sigh. They stood there for minutes before Severus started to speak knowing what the other boy wanted to hear from him.

"I was just....alone." Remus lifted his eyebrow, surprised that he actually spoke. He tightened the grip around him to reassure him that he was safe and that he could let his heart out.

"I have nothing anymore and nobody cares for me. I'm unlovable." He felt his own eyes sting. Did he really think that about himself?

"You aren't unlovable. Lily was just an accident and it's her loss if she doesn't forgive you. It may feel like all hope is lost but I promise you, things get better." Remus murmured in the crook of the warm neck attached to the Slytherin boy. He didn't smell how most people expected and it was the complete opposite. Especially his hair gave off a strong scent of probably tropic fruits but he couldn't get his tongue on it. It didn't matter though, it smelled nice and that is all that matters.

"You know, I know I haven't been the nicest to you these last couple of years and there is no excuse for it. I should have said something to James and Sirius about....well everything they did. I'm sorry. Don't let those fools get to you because I know that you are stronger than Severus. Don't give up." This struck Severus as lightning. He never predicted how good Remus was in comforting people, even him. Of course, the hug was hard to accept but he couldn't push him away. It was unfamiliar to him but safe at the same time.

"I just don't know what to do," Severus answered honestly. It suddenly became so much easier to talk to Remus and he didn't even comment on him using his front name because he loved how it rolled over his tongue.

The empty hole in Severus' stomach was gone and it felt like he had found the missing piece. Maybe it was just because he hadn't been hugged in forever but it felt like something more than that. Could he say this to Remus? He wanted to but didn't want to ruin the peaceful moment.

"It's okay to not know what you're doing or what to do. You don't have to have your life in order all the time. Living up to today's standards is harder than people think and I may not relate to your problems but I will always be there for you." Severus turned around, facing Remus with his arms still around him. He stammered a bit before returning the hug with his own arms. Remus' eyes went big from surprise and smirked after recovering and taking in what just happened. It was like he was a different person when no one else was around. The light pink blush on Severus' pale skin wasn't overlooked and he looked so cute like that.

He didn't know if it was because of his nervousness or because of the hug but asking about it wasn't the best thing to do. He smirked even harder at the thought of asking him and Severus who would just blush even harder.

"Thank you," he heard a silky voice whisper say.

"Let's sit shall we?" Remus proposed to him and luckily, he felt a small nod on his shoulder. He took his hand in his and pulled back from the hug that lasted several minutes, not that he complained about it. The grip hardened and this time it was Severus who did it instead of Remus. How did he manage to fall so hard for the man who bullied him all his childhood? He wasn't even sure if he actually fancied Remus or not but he certainly did feel different around him.

Before they sat on the hard ground, Remus pulled out his wand and a blanket with some soft pillows emerged in front of the two boys.

He led him to the blanket with the pillows before sitting down and tapping his hand on the place next to him, motioning for Severus to sit there. Severus sat down and looked uncomfortable once again. He wasn't used to having so much attention pointed at him. Well, at least no good attention like this. He went stiff when Remus accidentally touched his leg with his but didn't move and neither did Remus.

They sat like that for quite a while. Remus was fighting the sudden strong urge to pull Severus on his lap and rocking him back and forth while placing small kisses in his greasy, black hair. Instead, he began fidgeting with his fingers like he mostly did during situations where he did not know what to do. He could start a conversation but what could they possibly talk about?

Severus' home life was very private and as Remus had heard from rumours, also very bad so that was no option to start a conversation with. Maybe they could talk about their favourite subjects and professors but that seemed too basic. Remus closed his eyes and let his head fall against the wall. Their legs were still touching and Severus was as stiff as ever.

Carefully and calmly, he placed his hand on his thigh to let him know it was alright to relax and let his wards down. This was a safe place.

## Chapter seven

Severus heard him huff from the other side of the empty classroom. This was ridiculous! He thought.

He didn't do anything wrong yet here he was, sitting in detention for something he didn't even do. The only reason why he did it was that it was pure self-defence against those twats. It was all because of those bloody Gryffindors, or better said: The Marauders. He still cringed when saying the name in his mind.

Severus was on his way to the Slytherin Common Room to meet up with Lucius, Bellatrix and Narcissa. He looked up at Lucius as a mentor which was why he also admired him so much. Lucius had taken Severus under his wing since day one and made sure that he was safe, even protecting him against some bullies occasionally.

They were the only ones who truly cared for Severus but he felt like Lucius had different intentions. Not in a weird way but he tried to convince him to join the Death Eaters and Severus had really given good thought about it.

His hand made lines on the parchment while he felt someone in the room staring at him. Severus didn't dare to look up to see who it was but he guessed it was Lupin, especially after last night again. It was a stupid decision to even go there in the first place to meet up with him and he promised himself not to do it once more even though Severus enjoyed the company more than he should have.

It was just the feeling the boy managed to give him when he was with Remus. The feeling of being cared for and loved. He twirled the quill in between his thumb and index finger while biting on his lower lip in concentration. Another hour in this bloody hell and he would be out of here. It was even worse knowing the room was shared with Sirius and James too. Severus did wonder where Peter was but didn't dwell on it for long.

He furrowed his brows when he thought about what had happened that got him in detention.

Severus was casually sitting against the tree doing some reading after finally conquering his fear to sit there because of Lily. It was one of his favourite spots just like the Astronomy Tower and refused to let those bastards take his peace away. Suddenly, the bushes started rustling and Sirius and Remus came out with huge grins on their faces. There were no words to describe how bad Severus wanted to punch those smirks off.

They never gave Severus a day off and if they managed to go one day without bullying, something else would hit him like a tornado to ruin his day. There was always something every single day and it was making him lose the fight slowly, which Remus already noticed.

"Watcha reading?" Sirius came up to him and snatched the book out of his hand carelessly. Severus wanted to scream knowing how rare and precious that book was because it wasn't just any normal book. It was one of the few books in the world and on top of that, it was his mothers'.

He had to admit the book wasn't very pretty looking anymore but that didn't bother him because it made it more special.

"Sod off!" he said while getting up and brushing his robes down in less than a second.

"Snivellus is finally talking back," James said, laughing like the world was about to end if he

didn't. Severus walked towards Sirius with large, angry steps and reached out his hand to grab the book back.

"A bit eager," Sirius huffed before holding his arm high in the air so that Severus couldn't reach it. He grunted out of frustration when he tried to snatch the book from Sirius one more time.

"What do you want black?" Severus gave up trying to grab the book and wrapped his arms over each other in front of his chest.

"Don't you dare speak to Lily ever again. She doesn't want you Snivy so give up," James said. He could see a hint of jealousy in the eyes hidden behind the glasses and Severus had to hold himself back not to comment about it.

"I can do whatever I want goddamnit!" Sirius impatient tapped his foot on the ground with the book still high out of reach. It was like he was waiting for Severus to agree with them and never talk to Lily again and it was probably also the meaning of all of this. How dare they think they had control over him.

James pointed his wand towards Severus and yelled: "Scourgify." He began choking on the pink soap bubbles that appeared in his mouth. It was disgusting and he wanted to get rid of the taste as fast as possible.

Severus quickly restored and thought about what spell to use when he managed to wrap his fingers around his own wand. It would maybe be a bit too cruel but the boys deserved it, especially after all the years of torture they put him through. It was time to stand up for himself and also his only choice now that Lily was gone. It pained Severus to think about it and shook the thought out of his mind, concentrating on the situation.

A crowd formed around the group to see what all the noise was about. Nobody did something and they just stared. Some were laughing, others were pointing and whispering but most kept quiet to see how this would end.

"Locomotor Wibbly!" He wanted to go for a more serious jinx but this was all he could think of with the pressure on his back from the people who were watching. Of course, Severus didn't want to get expelled and decided this was the best thing to do.

James fell over and Sirius looked at him with an angry glare and held the book in two hands, ripping the page out. Severus screamed at him to stop but Sirius only continued with a smirk on his face while James struggled with getting up from the ground.

Remus made his way through the people surrounding them by pushing them to the side and quickly grabbed Sirius' arm.

"Pads, stop it." He looked confused and dropped the ripped book, letting it hit the surface, obeying the command Moony gave him. It wasn't long before McGonagall came rushing in with a student by her side who probably explained everything already to her. She gave the boys a furious stare and shot the crowd away. Severus dropped down on his knees to the book to see what condition it was in and sadly, it was hopeless to try to repair it.

"Care to explain yourself?"

## Chapter eight

The hour faded in half an hour of detention. It was unbearable and felt like Remus was here forever. He still couldn't believe what Padfoot and Prongs had done before he arrived. Remus was studying with Peter but it was impossible to make him do any work so he decided to find his other friends.

He glanced over to the other side of the room to see Snape deep in thought. His eyebrows were furrowed and he was staring at the air without blinking once. The pain hidden behind the black eyes touched Remus. He could have guessed it was because of that bloody book his friends, or better said: Sirius, destroyed. He wanted to run to Severus and hug him so hard that his lungs couldn't take in any more air.

His friends went too far this time and Remus had to do something about it. Severus" is lucky that they aren't doing anything right now in detention to him but still, this couldn't keep on happening.

He sighed and bounced his foot up and down at a fast pace. It's something he does when he's anxious and believe it or not, but it helps. Remus stared at Severus who, if he guessed, was drawing something. His head was hungover some parchment and his face almost touched it. His tongue frequently licked the bottom of his lip and his posture wasn't very straight anymore. Remus chuckled to himself, it looked cute how he was so deep in concentration.

He wanted to have a closer look at what the Slytherin boy was creating but James and Sirius were sitting next to him so that wasn't a good plan. He heard James snicker a bit while crumpling up a piece of parchment and throwing it across the room, against Severus' head.

"Snivellus," Sirius whispered. However, Severus didn't respond nor he looked up and continued with drawing, almost like he didn't hear it but Remus saw his shoulders go up and his body tense. It was no wonder to him because he was probably bloody scared of them and Remus couldn't blame him. They even lost count over how many times his friends and he bullied Severus.

Severus never really did something against it and if he did, mostly it would end with Severus being mortified and humiliated in front of the school. Remus never participated in those things but would confess, he did help bullying sometimes even though they weren't so bad. Remus was more the sneaky one of the Marauders and knew how to get away with some things without getting caught or ending in detention. James and Sirius, well, they weren't so smooth and played it in the open field as if they wanted to get expelled. McGonagall came walking in the now open door.

"I hope you have thought about your behaviour in the time you've spent in detention. You may go." She folded her hands over each other while silently waiting for the group to stand up and exit the room. Minerva knew damn well this wasn't going to be the last time this would happen but expelling the boys was no option. Albus said it himself: "We can't expel Minerva. We need them." and with need, he meant: The Gryffindor sweethearts have a good reputation and we need it for the school. It's like he didn't care about them bullying an innocent boy just because he is in Slytherin and probably a few other reasons too.

Sadly, it wasn't Minerva who was in charge of such things, it was Albus.

James and Sirius were the first to get up while Severus took his time packing in all his stuff. Remus hesitated to talk to Severus because it was a good opportunity at the moment.

"You coming Moony?" Remus stared at his two friends and made a motion with his hand,

gesturing for them to go ahead.

"See you at dinner then," Sirius said with a wink. McGonoggal was watching their every move like a hawk which made Remus even more nervous. He packed his bag as slowly as he could and when he was done, Severus was still putting in his last things. He puffed a piece of hair out of his face before getting up and walking towards the entrance past Remus. Remus looked shocked that he ignored him like that but couldn't blame him after that afternoon.

"Severus wait!" It was tricky to go by his front name, especially when there were other people who could hear it in the corridors. Snape stopped in his path and turned in his heels with an angry glare on his face.

"Don't call me that." They stood like that for a few seconds while Remus was figuring out what to say.

"Erm- I wanted to say sorry for what happened and I was wondering...." Severus kept staring at him through narrowed eyes, waiting for him to finish the sentence.

"Wondering what, Lupin?" he sneered. Remus didn't comment on the last name base because he could see it coming already. They were in public after all.

"Wondering if you would maybe....want to study with me?" This was the moment, the moment Severus would say no, walk away and never talk to him again. He felt so stupid.

"Is this some kind of sick joke? Where are your friends?" He seemed suspicious about the situation and out of impatience, wrapped his arms over his chest.

"No, no it's not a joke. I just thought it would be fun and I desperately need to get my DADA grades up. Since you know so much about that subject I thought maybe....you know what, never mind." The answer was clear enough for him even though he didn't say anything yet and turned around to walk to the Gryffindor tower before feeling a touch on his shoulder. Confused, he turned his head to see who it was, looking right in the black eyes of Severus. Eyes where you could get lost in.

"Sure."

"Uhm, yeah great. After dinner in the library?" Remus asked.

"See you then."

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the library was quite like most days: almost completely empty. It didn't bother Severus at all, liking the quietness and peace of it. He could lower his wands a bit and stop constantly paying attention to his surroundings, scared for Potter and his friends to pull a prank again. He got a small grin on his face as if they would even know where the library is. At this point, it would even surprise him if Potter or Black could read. Pettigrew probably never even saw a book in his life, let alone opening one.

Remus on the other hand was nothing like his imbecile friends. Severus didn't even know when he started going on first base with his name in his mind. Remus was smart and that was not something he could deny anymore as much as he wanted to believe Remus was just as stupid as the rest. But he actually tried with subjects such as Potions or Herbology and it amused Severus to see it. The deep concentration on his face that he saw occasionally was with no words to describe. Sadly, it was a face Severus barely saw and mostly because it was disturbed by his stupid friends. Severus

had to hide his shock when he asked him to join him after dinner to teach DADA.

He had skipped dinner to avoid getting picked on by the Gryffindors but luckily, hunger did't take over his body. He was used to eating too little and especially on summer vacations where there wasn't even enough food if he wanted to. Severus knew he was too thin and the Marauders made it even clearer than it was as if he hadn't noticed it himself yet. They always found every flaw of his appearance and it lowered his self-esteem but didn't show it. Of course, at first, he didn't believe the words they were saying even though they were constantly repeated by his father before going to Hogwarts.

Throughout the year, Severus did start to believe them and tried everything to fix it while the effort was useless.

His hair was too greasy? He started to wash it two times a day. He was too thin for people's likings? Started eating until he was nauseous which ended up in the hospital wing after a while. There was nothing Severus could do to please the boys and hated to admit he even tried to please them.

Lily did always tell him not to listen to the words, saying he was perfect the way he was and that everybody is different and unique in their own ways but that was just Lily"s nature. It was rather attractive, such a loving personality. Severus didn't fall for people"s looks but mostly by personalities because they always told the story. Looks were misleading and you had to be careful not to fall for a toxic person just because he or she is attractive.

It's like wearing red-tinted glasses, you miss all the red flags that were so clear for other people but that's what you get when you're in love. That"s why every teenage girl is sliming over the Marauders, excluding Pettigrew. Severus took a seat and opened a book, waiting for Remus to come if he was even bothered enough to show up.

## Chapter nine

Severus was already deep in his reading and didn't even notice the presence next to him until a hand was placed on his right shoulder. He jumped and wanted to grab his wand before realizing it was just Remus.

"Hey," Remus sat while dragging one of the chairs towards Severus and sitting on it, not once leaving his eyes.

"I'm astonished you even bothered enough to show up," he muttered under his breath, secretly hoping that Remus didn't hear it.

"What can I say, I'm full of surprises."

"Humorous," Snape said without once looking up from his hands.

"So, where do we begin Master Snape," Remus jokes. Severus rolled his eyes knowing that this was a waste of time.

"Well, do you have any assignments due?" Remus licked his lips and tried to remember the assignment given for tomorrow.

"We have to write a ten-page essay about the Cruciatus Curse and how to defend yourself against it. I haven't been able to gather much information about it in school books."

Severus opened his mouth to say something but quickly closed it again and instead, nodded. He thought back about the one time he had felt the curse and it felt like absolute hell. All that he wanted to do at that moment was hidden. It was during the encounter with Voldemort that Lucius dragged him into. It was pure to see how much the young Slytherin could handle and it luckily wasn't very long. Severus was still pondering about the idea to join the Death Eaters thinking they were doing good to the world.

It would also be in his favour in the end when Voldemort would finally conquer the world. At least Severus would be safe knowing he's on the Death Eaters side and that he wouldn't be killed. Not that his life mattered that much anymore either and he didn't really care if he did die. He rubbed over his wrist when it suddenly stung from pain.

"Oh yes, Cruciatus Curse. That won't be too hard." Remus blinked and saw the way Snape unconsciously held his left arm against his chest to protect it.

It wouldn't be the dark mark right? Remus had heard from some people that Lucius joined them and wouldn't be very surprised to find out Severus had followed after that. However, Remus was wrong and it had nothing to do with the dark mark but it was the secret Severus had hidden from everyone.

"Are you okay?" Remus slowly reached out to grab his left arm and that would also immediately give him the answer whether he had joined them or not. He silently prayed he was't dumb enough to actually do it and be one of Voldemort. Severus yanked his arm out of the grip and gave an angry glare.

"Are we going to do this or not?" he sneered.

"Yeah, yeah of course. Sorry," Lupin nervously said while looking down at his lap. It was a stupid question because it was predictable Severus wouldn't answer it. He didn't even exactly know what was going on between them, whether they were friends or not. Severus didn't view it as friends and

he probably didn't even want friends.

They were getting lost in their assignments and didn't even glance at the time. Severus had to admit the company he had was quite enjoyable even though he would never say that out loud to someone.

It almost felt like Lupin was just pitying the boy and everybody who ever saw him knew that he hated getting pitied. People began treating him as weak or less as if he wasn't capable of doing minor tasks such as washing the dishes or even when he got an emotional outburst, people said it was just because of his childhood. That's why he stopped telling others about his past or what he had endured.

He did tell Lily a few things when she questioned it but not too much to get her worried. It's not like she really wanted to know either. She wanted Severus to act like everything's fine so that it would be easier for her to deal with. But Severus didn't mind and loved Lily's company even though most of the time was spent without many conversations. He was always fascinated by the Dark Arts but sadly, she wasn't and didn't want to hear about it so you could say they had their differences but remained good friends until that day. The words still lingered around him making him dwell in his own guilt while trying to get rid of the tiny voice in his head that tried to sabotage him. Severus had picked up on his own behaviour and also noticed how he was self-sabotaging his friendship with Lily and other people too even though they weren't friends.

Remus looked up after writing his last sentence. It seemed like Severus was in a different universe in his mind and it made him laugh a bit to see him so concentrated on nothing in particular.

"Severus. It's almost curfew." There was no response and Severus narrowed his eyes and got an even deeper frown on his brows.

"Hello! Earth to Severus Snape." Only a grunt came from between his teeth before snapping his head to the right where Lupin was sitting.

"Hm?"

"It's almost curfew and even though I'm a prefect, it's not smart to stay here. I thought, maybe you wanted to join me and go to the Astronomy Tower?" it was a bold move and it could either go terribly wrong or terribly good, there was no in-between.

"Lupin?"

"It's fine if you don't want to, it's just that- I don't know."

Severus pulled at his sleeve which Remus noticed but it was something unconsciously that Severus did. He desperately wanted to know what it was and if he truly joined the Death Eaters and the dark lord's army.

"Why are you doing this?" This was certainly not the answer Remus wanted and was not prepared for it either.

"Doing what?"

"You know what I'm talking about. We've never hung out before and now suddenly you're taking an interest in me. So I'm asking you again: why are you doing this?" Remus seemed to hesitate whether he should tell the truth or not. It started off with pity and keeping Severus from jumping off the tower, it became some sort of mission to him to keep him safe. Now, he actually didn't really know why he did it. Of course, Remus was very curious about the whole Dark Mark and wondered if he should inform Dumbledore, saying he thinks something's up with Severus and his

connection with the dark side. That was something he will definitely do after this, without Snape knowing.

"I-I honestly don't know. But does that even matter?" Remus asked with the hope that he will join him.

"Well let me know when you do." With those words, Severus rose from his stool and swung his torn up bag over his shoulder that softly bumped against his hips while walking away. It was obvious that Severus wanted a real reason why he deserved to get this much attention but he didn't have a reason and didn't need to have a reason. The boy's company was relaxing, calming and it felt great to talk with someone so intelligent as Severus. His friends weren't nearly as smart and he lacked a good conversation when he was with them.

He grunted while suddenly, a headache popped up and it was going to be a long night with that.

## Chapter ten

"Moons. Wanna join Hogsmeade today?" Saturday morning and he just arrived in the Great Hall for breakfast.

"Why not," he said tiredly to James because of the lack of sleep. It was something he got used to but he certainly didn't enjoy the headaches. He almost forgot the appointment he arranged with Dumbledore today and to talk about Severus. He felt like he was betraying his....not a friend but someone he knew, it still seems wrong.

"Oh actually, I'll catch up with you later. I have to talk to Dumbledore." Sirius, James and Peter grinned and Sirius playfully elbowed him.

"Someone in trouble?" Remus rolled his eyes before stuffing his mouth with some buttered toast to keep him from snapping at Sirius. The subject of the conversation quickly made a turn when the words caught up with his ears.

"Look at Snivellus. We'll have to prank him in Hogsmeade."

"Why not now? I'm bored anyway."

"Because I'm not going to serve another detention because of that prat," Sirius sneered at Peter. Remus would rather want to go to Hogsmeade with them to try to prevent his friends from hurting Severus but couldn't ditch on Dumbledore. Of bloody course he couldn't ditch Dumbledore for his friends, he was the headmaster.

It would be a bit embarrassing to stick him up so he decided to just go. It won't take that long and it would just be a quick chat about Severus.

Remus' stomach was filled with toast and pumpkin juice and he briskly gave a glance at the Slytherin table, eyes scanning for the black greasy boy. He found him at the other side of the table as far from the rest of his house drawing again in his notebook on the table. It was black, as expected, and rather plain and ordinary.

His plate was pushed to the side with not much on it and Remus figured he probably didn't really eat that much looking at his lean figure. Severus' appearance was unhealthy and it was obvious he fell short of hygiene which made him sorrowful for him. There must be a reason why a person wouldn't take proper care of themselves right?

"Speaking off," he snapped his head back around to his own table. "Yule Ball is coming up." Remus totally forgot about that. The Yule Ball wasn't very close but someone to go with was important to the friend group and they couldn't afford to go alone for their reputation. The weather outside was getting chillier by the day too but he hadn't had the time to fully absorb the beauty of the winter yet.

"Prongs, are you going to ask Lily? I'm positive she won't decline," Peter gave a wink at him knowing they are dating already. James was rather private about it which came as a shock for Remus thinking he would brag about having Lily for himself. From what he heard was that the relationship was at the edge of breaking up.

"Of course I'm asking her don't be stupid." He gave a smack on his head that earned a small squeak out of Peter.

The Great Hall was slowly getting more abandoned every time a student walked out. The majority was going to Hogsmeade but Remus had some business to deal with. He whispered the password: "Lemondrops" for the office which revealed the spiralling stairs around the Phoenix. They were beautiful creatures and very rare too. Remus was immediately greeted by the warm, sparkling eyes of his headmaster.

"Remus Lupin! Good to see you have a seat." Dumbledore waved his hand at the chair which Remus obeyed and sat down in front of the desk.

"Lemon Drop?" He held out some lemon drops and Remus politely declined the offer.

"What brought you here today, my child?"

He fumbled with the hem of his shirt while looking everywhere except for the eyes in front of him. Dumbledore noticed the nervousness of the boy and the look on his face immediately changed.

"Is there something you'd wish to tell me?" Remus took a deep breath and tried not to think of what Severus would do if he found out about this because he hated people talking about him and making assumptions. Especially if it's a serious case such as the dark lord.

"Well, I've noticed some things while being with Severus. I'm not quick in jumping to conclusions but I figured you would like to know," he paused for a second before continuing the conversation. "He touches his left forearm a lot and I know that that's the side the Dark Mark gets branded. There are some rumours spreading around on Severus joining the Death Eaters and I didn't give much thought about it but I'm a bit suspicious about it."

Dumbledore looked shocked by this assumption. The rumours didn't go unrecognized because even though he was the headmaster, there was always some gossip discussed after staff meetings. Albus leaned back in his chair and his arms were crossed in front of his chest.

"I see. Could you do me a favour?"

"Anything Sir."

"Can you keep an eye out on Severus? I don't normally ask this but I'm rather busy at the moment." Remus raised an eyebrow but nodded after that, pursing his lips.

"Was that all?"

"Yes sir."

"Well then, enjoy your Hogsmeade day." Remus gave him a warm smile which Dumbledore answered with a smile too.

Hogwarts was looking empty when he came out of the office. He actually wanted to make use of the empty castle and make some time for himself but didn't want to desert his friends.

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Severus was walking around in Hogsmeade which he normally didn't do to avoid attracting any detention towards himself but it was Christmas soon and he wanted to pursue some gifts. It was unlikely for him to receive gifts other than from his mother which he didn't bother to dwell on any longer than necessary.

He wasn't really into sweets but made a quick stop at Honeydukes either way. There were all sorts of things and people were tempted to buy the entire store out of stock when walking in. Severus only kept it small and bought: Chocolate frogs, Jelly slugs and some sugar quills.

When walking out of the store, he saw a glimpse of the backside of the girl he knew too well: Lily. It wasn't a surprise when James suddenly appeared in front of her with a flower bouquet to give to her.

Lily blushed and Severus wondered how she could actually fall for that bastard which made him gag thinking about it. He rolled his eyes when he saw James drifting his hand to her waist to pull her close but couldn't help the hint of jealousy inside him. Famous James Potter was out there living his perfect, spoiled life. How did Remus end up being friends with such twats!

## Chapter eleven

Remus found his friends after a while of searching through the crowds in Hogsmeade. James and Lily were nowhere to be found and probably went off with the two of them to get some privacy. Sirius was secretly complaining to Remus after his arrival about Peter which made him grin. Severus and he crossed paths a few times and saw him disappear in the quills shop.

"I'll be right back guys. Need to buy some quills," he excused himself. Sirius was glaring angrily at him for leaving him alone with Wormtail but didn't give much thought about it because he was on a mission now: finding out if he indeed joined them.

It was fairly quiet inside and not many people were there, most of them were at stores like Honeydukes or the Three Broomsticks Inn. He found Severus silently in a corner with his infamous bag he had last time against his hips, looking around.

"Surprised to see you here," he said while walking towards them. Severus flinched at hearing the loud and familiar voice and was almost scared the other Gryffindors were there to mess with him.

"Sod off Lupin. I'm not in the mood for your pranks," he sneered. Severus had to act this way in public because he didn't know how Remus would be with his friends. Maybe he would pretend like they hadn't spent the night together a few times on the Astronomy Tower and like he hadn't almost jumped off it.

"Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you like that."

"I'm not scared. Now if you'll excuse me," he tried to walk towards the exit even though he hadn't pursued a new quill yet, that would come another time.

"Oh uhm. I was actually wondering whether you would join me-" Remus wanted to finish the sentence but the door already opened and Severus was gone the next second. He ran one hand through his hair and sighed. This mission wasn't going to be easy.

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Severus was surprised to see Remus without his little friend group in Hogsmeade. He knew what he wanted to say but didn't feel like having company around at the moment and would rather be alone.

He was debating whether he should get Lily a gift for Christmas. Seeming the circumstances it wasn't the best choice to do so but it is- was- his best and only friend he ever had. It wouldn't do so much harm to get her something small anyways and get her some supplies for Hogwarts.

Severus was a little short on money but he saved it all up for this occasion even though it was more expensive than he thought. He quickly found a good present for his mother to send to her because coming home wasn't an option with his abusive father still in the house. He begged his mother to come to see her at Christmas but she simply refused and eventually he gave in and dropped the subject. He was feeling sorry for her that she couldn't enjoy Christmas and was stuck with the pathetic man called her husband. Although, he couldn't deny being scared of the man.

The freezing wind blew through his lanky hair and he wrapped his scarf tighter around the neck. Not many people choose winter over summer but he definitely did. Not only because of the magical looking surroundings the white snow created, but also because he could hide himself even more than usual.

Summer meant exposing more skin and wearing fewer clothes which freaked him out. Severus was very self-conscious about his looks but wouldn't admit it to anyone else after his father told him only weak people have insecurities.

He pondered about getting a present for Remus. If he would, it was going to be anonymous because he didn't want his friends to find it of course.

He got into a shop in the corner not even bothering to look at the name and his only attention was fixed on the beautiful looks of it. It was small but looked cosy. He entered the shop and briefly glanced around before walking towards the front of the room to the old-looking woman behind the counter. The shop truly had everything, from candy to Cauldrons. The woman behind the counter was probably in her 90's she guessed. She had wrinkles around her eyes and grey hair that was shining in the light. She had a friendly looking face and small glasses on the tip of her nose which studied the boy's look.

"Hello, my dear. How can I help you?"

"I'm looking for a gift for my....friend. Something special and personal," Severus explained to the cheerful woman.

"Ah, I see. Can you describe the boy's personality?" Severus thought for a few seconds before he began speaking again.

"He has a brilliant mind and is very clever. He's really sweet to everyone and even though his best friends are twats, he stays true to himself. When I see him smile, it immediately brings joy to whatever day I had and is one of the closest friends I had so far. It's someone who's there for you through thick and thin and doesn't judge others. He cares for people....even though he barely knows them." The words were flowing out his mouth and he startled even himself that he actually said those things about Remus.

"Seems like a very special boy indeed," she offered him a warm smile before turning her back to him.

"You're lucky that I have the perfect gift." Severus couldn't help but smirk when she said that. He couldn't see what she was doing because her back blocked the view and he waited patiently. She placed a black, little box with a ribbon around it on the counter and shoved it towards the Slytherin boy.

"What is it?" he asked curiously.

"Oh don't worry about that." She winked and waved him goodbye. Severus secretly wanted to know what was in the black little box but once he opened it, he couldn't close it anymore and so he trusted the woman blindly. He just hoped the woman knew what she chose and didn't screw up his blossoming friendship.

## Chapter twelve

The pub was as busy as always when Remus, James, Lily, Peter and Sirius sat down at the table in the Three Broomsticks.

He did fancy a butterbeer after being in the cold all day. Lily and James seemed closer again and that indicated that they had a good day together. Remus unwrapped his scarf from his neck and pulled his gloves off his fingers which tingled when it came in contact with the warm air.

Lily and James were sitting next to each other while Sirius, Peter and Remus sat opposite them with Remus in the outer corner. There was nothing really special about the conversation that quickly started, not like the talks he had with Severus. Most of the time the hours were spent in silence with him but the times that they did speak to each other, were truly magnificent. They talked about their interest while looking at the stars from the Astronomy Tower which they had done a few times after curfew.

Severus never discussed something private such as his childhood home life. He only stuck with the Hogwarts subject and his favourite Professors. Remus on the other hand tried to change the subject sometimes and talk more about how they spent summer vacations and how their family was like but in those times, he was the only one talking while Severus nodded and hummed in response.

He had told him a bit about the situation with Lily and how she refused to even look at him now. Remus understood that what Severus did was unacceptable but not unforgivable. Every human makes mistakes and they only learn from them. Being in the Slytherin house meant constant use of that word and Severus never used it but it slipped out of his mouth, he explained that night.

It's a whole other story when Lily started dating the rival Severus. He saw in his eyes how much it hurt when he saw them kiss in the Great Hall for the first time after they've already been together for a week or two. Lily and James didn't yell it through the school but keeping it a secret were definitely not what they did either. Remus took in his surroundings, eyeing on the people in the Three Broomsticks to maybe hope to see someone familiar to get out of this situation where Lily and James were practically making love.

"Get a room you two," Sirius said, smirking. Lily blushed a deep red and James wiped his thumb over his lips.

"Sorry Pads." The waitress came and they ordered some butterbeer and Wormtail also ordered some food for himself as always. Sirius rolled his eyes and made a snarky comment about it before earning a hit against the back of his head from Peter.

"Well that was uncalled for," he said while rubbing over the freshly hit spot on his head. James laughed and Lily softly giggled with them. Remus noticed how much she changed these last couple of weeks, probably because of her new boyfriend because she was acting like a clingy fangirl. He liked the independent Lily more but couldn't complain.

The door opened and a black-haired Slytherin stood in the doorway, directly making his way to the bar. Remus saw the bag hanging over his shoulder and against his hip which made him awfully masculine looking.

The boy mouthed something and received a firewhiskey not even moments later while Remus and his friends were still waiting. He was also surprised how easily the bartender gave Severus the alcohol with the fact he was still a minor which was clear to see.

What shocked him, even more, was that Severus drank it with no trouble, no flinching as if he did this more often than he should.

"Prongs, there's Snivvy." Sirius elbowed him which made James look up to the bar, seeing only the hanged backside.

"Not in the mood now," James said and pulled his girlfriend closer to himself and gave an angry glare at Severus even though he couldn't even see it.

The conversation was nothing more than just discussing Christmas and the Yule Ball, literally just everything that had to do with Hogwarts. The butterbeer warmed his inside which Remus was thankful for. From the corner of his eye, Severus was getting up and paid for the firewhiskey before walking out of the pub again. That certainly was a quick visit and Remus wanted to study him more because of the mission he had now.

He was truly happy to have an excuse to get near Severus but wouldn't admit that to himself.

"Uhm. I still have some things to do so I'm going. See you later." With that, Remus got up and wrapped his scarf tight around his neck, pulling the cloak over his shoulders before exiting with big steps. He hadn't even stayed long enough to hear the shouting from his friends who wanted to know where he was going.

The outside air was hitting him and a shiver ran down his spine while searching for Severus who just walked out. Then he spotted him, sitting alone on a bench in the distance and enjoying the view. The dark dot became more clear with each step Remus made towards the boy. Severus eyed him suspiciously when he walked in his direction and was almost afraid of what might happen next, another prank. To his surprise, Remus sat down on the spot next to him on the bench with a loud sigh.

The brown, cashew nut hair sticking out in all sorts of directions while Severus' hair stayed neatly in place because of it's length he grew the last couple of months.

"Leave me alone." Remus didn't say anything and pulled something out of his own bag. Severus looked down at the hand that was being held out to him and saw a chocolate frog. He raised an eyebrow but took it anyway and Remus began eating his own in silence. Severus was hesitating to take the first bite because maybe it would be poisoned, or drugged to make him pass out but trusted his instincts and took a bite out of the chocolate frog. The chocolate melted in his mouth and he adored the sweet taste it gave. They finished eating and Remus carefully pushed a note in Severus' hand before standing up and walking back to the Three Broomsticks where his friends still were.

He unfolded the note to see what he had written on it and was shocked to see the words.

Meet me at the Astronomy Tower after curfew.

They already met a few times thereafter the....incident but he assumed Remus was done with him already because he hadn't heard anything from him the last couple of days. Yet, he decided to just go and see what Remus wanted to calm his curiosity.

## Chapter thirteen

A few hours spent in the library flew by and soon it was time for dinner already. Severus didn't actually study much and his mind kept drifting to Christmas. He was spending it in Hogwarts like every year which was quite nice. There weren't a lot of Slytherins left and the room would always be just for himself just like the library on most days. He saw it as a break from all the bullying and torture because of course, the Marauders would go home every year to spend Christmas with family. The people who did stay in the Hogwarts castle weren't that bad and didn't give Severus any unwanted attention. He secretly hoped that Remus would be spending it here but there was a 1% chance for that to happen and maybe even less than that.

He gathered his books and stuffed them in his bag before making the trip to the Great Hall which he decided not to skip for one time. Severus usually didn't eat or sneaked something out of the kitchen but didn't have the energy to sneak it out which was probably because of the lack of food. While coming closer to the doors, the laughter and chatting became louder which he hated. He hated loud sounds in general and it didn't matter from whom they came, they were obnoxious and unpleasant.

Loud voices reminded him of his father and made him flinch when they would suddenly appear by someone. That's why he loved quietness so much.

He sat down next to Avery who was chatting with someone he didn't really properly know. Severus scanned the Gryffindor table when he felt eyes burning on his back and saw Remus directly staring at him before quickly turning his head to the food in front of him. He scooped some potatoes on his plate and some other random stuff that was in arms reach. He didn't exactly care what he put on his plate and started to pick at the with a fork, letting out a sigh.

Severus looked over at Avery still chatting to the same boy and wondered whether Avery already joined the Death Eaters. It was no secret to him that Mulciber and Avery wanted to join but didn't know if they already made their mind up. They were the closest people Severus could call "friends" apart from Remus. He did regard Remus as a sort of friend now but wasn't sure what they were at the moment. Maybe Remus had a very different view over their friendship which he couldn't blame him for. Nobody wanted to willingly be friends with the greasy git.

Severus took out his pocket watch and decided to head to the Astronomy Tower early. He needed to escape this noise.

After being out of breath while climbing the stairs, he finally made it up the tower and looked at the sun already setting. It was winter so it was darker quicker than normal and it was another thing that he loved about winter. There was no stars insight because they were covered by the thick, large clouds.

Severus sighed and sat down on the ground with his back against the cold, hard wall while shivering when it came in contact with his body. He took out the two cigarettes he slipped into his pockets when nobody was looking. It was hard to get it, especially here in Hogwarts but he got his connections with people. He placed the cigarette above his ear to save it for later and did"t want to forget about it while the other one was held between his lips. The muggle lighter came in contact with the tip before a flame came out and lit the cigarette. It was a nasty habit but it wasn't like he was addicted, it was something Severus sometimes did to calm down.

He inhaled the smoke and felt it burning in his lungs. The first time he did this was when he was a child and found some half-used ones on the ground in the park. Severus had just escaped his father

after he almost drowned him in the bath and his mother told him to run as fast as he could. He knew when he got home, his mother would be in terrible condition and it pained him knowing he failed to protect her. Was he really such a coward to literally run away from his problems? Apparently, he was. He didn't cough when inhaling the first puff he ever did. It wasn't as bad as people said it would be the first time.

Then again, Severus was used to smelling it all the time at his home and maybe he smoked without even knowing just by breathing it in.

The time flew by and the cigarette was already halfway gone, the sun was replaced with the darkness. The only reflection of light was the white snow.

"You're already here." He jumped at the sound of someone else who was no one other than Remus Lupin. It wasn't curfew yet and that's why Remus was surprised to see Severus sitting as if he had been there forever now.

"Hi." Remus stared at him from a distance and eyed the cigarette before looking into his eyes again.

"You know, smoking is a bad habit. You shouldn't do it." Severus rolled his eyes as if he hadn't heard it for a million times already. He remembered the second one behind his ear and offered it to Remus, holding out his hand with the cigarette between his thumb and index finger.

"Want one?" Remus kept staring before snatching it out of his hand and Severus began chuckling softly.

"What's so funny?"

"You're first giving me a lecture about how I shouldn't smoke and a second later you're holding one yourself. Not really giving a good example for a Prefect." He rolled his eyes once more and lighted the tip with the muggle lighter. Remus had done it a few times but not very much and didn't dare to breathe in too much, afraid of coughing like a maniac and then Severus making fun of him for it.

He sat down next to Severus, shoulders touching each other but neither of them pulled away from the contact. He didn't want to break the comfortable silence but knew the task Dumbledore had given him and had to proceed with it.

"So, when was your first time smoking?" He tried to keep the conversation light and wouldn't dare to ask something about his childhood or the Death Eaters.

"Eight or Nine I guess. After an....argument with my father and I found a few half-smoked ones on the ground in the park. You?" Eight or nine, that was very young but he didn't comment on it, wanting to find out more.

"With Sirius at a party. Can I ask you something?" This was it, Remus was going to ask something about his dad and hoped Severus wouldn't completely break down even though there was a small chance for that to not happen.

"Spit it out Lupin." Severus hated small talks and already guessed that his first question wasn't really something Remus wanted to know.

"What is your father like? I mean, there are a lot of rumours about....well about him." Severus pursed his lips together, eyes squinting while looking emotionless in front of him at nothing specifically. Could he really trust Remus?

"He wasn't the nicest man, that's for sure. Coming home drunk almost every day and releasing his anger on me and my mother. I, later on, learned how to not piss him off by being quiet, keeping my head down and not crying when he punished me. Even though I learned those things, I still got beaten up but it would be less painful when I kept quiet. I got used to it I guess," he finished. Remus was stunned that he actually opened up so much and he even saw him wipe over his cheek while turning his head away from him. Was he crying? He said nothing and pulled the Slytherin in his lap, giving a small kiss on the hair while holding him tight in the embrace.

"That must be awful. I'm sorry."

"I don't need your pity Lupin," he sneered and struggled to get out of his grip. There was the old Severus he knew again but it was nice while it lasted.

"It's not pity."

"And you expect me to believe that? Why are you doing this anyway? Are you just trying to get close to me so I tell you all my little secrets and then rushing over to your little Gryffindor friends? Laughing about my pathetic life behind my back." The voice grew harder with every word and he was practically spitting over the ground and Remus knew he must be furious at this point. He definitely made a mistake by asking that question and ruined the moment to find out more. Severus stood up from his place and Remus quickly followed.

"No! I wouldn't do that. Look, I'm sorry for asking so let's just drop it okay?" Severus shook his head and made a few steps towards Lupin, almost trapping him between the wall and the body in front of him. He made another step forward which pinned him against the wall and Severus' hands were placed next to his head, faces inches away from each other.

"Just stay the fuck away from me," he breathed heavily against the cheek of Remus.

"I know you don't want me to leave Severus." He grinned at the angry, yet confused expression that took over Severus.

"You don't know me." Their noses were almost touching and Remus briefly looked at the thin lips that could be connected with his if he just leaned forward. The faint cigarette smoke was lingering between them as Severus spoke with his silky voice, sending blood to Remus' groin.

"Are you sure about that?" He said and before Severus could even answer, their lips connected with each other. The warm feeling in his stomach took over and he was suddenly aware of every part of their body that was touching. The lips were slightly chapped but at the same time, softer than velvet. The cigarettes they had just smoked were all they could taste at the moment. There was a hint of peppermint and earl grey tea which could not be described with just words. They were both nervous and it was obvious to detect that from the kiss.

It wasn't like kissing some girl Remus barely knew but it was like kissing the love of his life, knowing he wanted to spend every second possible with him.

The kiss was innocent but made a turn when he bit Severus' lip softly, asking for entrance. It became passionate and hungry with lust. The boy who pinned him against the wall moaned when their tongue found the other.

Remus' hands wrapped around the thin waist and switched them so that Severus was now pushed against the wall. A hand found the back of the light brown hair and gently tugged on it, making the kiss even deeper than it already was. It almost seemed like his whole body would break at any point.

They pulled back to catch their breaths while looking at each other. Severus was flabbergasted by the sudden move Remus had taken but was replaced with a wide smile on his face.

## Chapter fourteen

They waited until their breathing became even again but didn't move an inch from one another. Chests were rising heavily up and down and he could still feel the breathing on his cheek. Their lips were plump and redder than normal.

Did Remus really kiss Severus? It's not like he complained when their lips collided but it came out of nowhere. Severus' face gave off a small blush and he ran his thumb over the swollen lips while avoiding the gaze of the man in front of him. Remus picked up on his behaviour and shook his head, lifting Severus' chin with his finger so that he was now looking into his black eyes.

"I shouldn't have done that without your permission," Remus said nervously, hoping that he won't back out because he was really starting to like him.

"Don't worry. I don't mind."

"Does that mean I can do it again?" he waited hopefully for an answer and Severus only grew hotter in his face but nodded. A smirk crept on his face while pulling him into a kiss again, their lips brushing. Unlike the other one, this one was less with lust and more with love. It didn't last as long as the previous kiss either but they both didn't seem to mind.

The silence between them suddenly became uncomfortable and Remus shifted back a bit, giving Severus some distance.

He scraped his throat, trying to find some good words to say but didn't find any. Severus apparently didn't know what to do either and it looked like an eternity before Remus pulled the boy in for a hug. His arms snaked around the back to press him even closer to his body and Severus stood there with his arms hanging next to him, clearly not exactly sure what to do. After a while, he relaxed in the hug and quickly made use of his arms too. They didn't have to talk at the moment, the silence was speaking for itself and it was amazing to have someone with whom you didn't have to fill in the blank spaces. Talking was not necessary.

Remus slowly released him from his arms.

"I should head back. My friends are probably wondering where I am." He wanted nothing more than to stay here with Severus the entire night, just cuddling and falling asleep with him in his arms but it would raise suspicion and he was not in the mood for that. Pads could never drop the subject before finding out where he was and he should know better than anyone else. Remus was gone one time the entire night with some girl. They didn't do anything because he wasn't comfortable with that but they stayed up talking and the next morning, Sirius wanted to know and refused to give up. Eventually, he told him so that he would stop bothering him which worked.

"Yeah. That would be wise." Remus' gaze drifted off to his left arm again and Severus tugged the sleeve.

"Goodnight Remus."

"Goodnight." He watched as Remus turned on his heels and walked away, leaving him alone on the Astronomy Tower. The half-smoked cigarettes were on the ground and Severus pulled out another one from the little box in his hands while the Gryffindor boy was walking down the stairs.

He muttered the password and the painting went open, creating the little passway to get to the common room. The room was empty except for Lily and James.

"Ey mate. Where have you been all night?" James' arm was draped over Lily's shoulder and they were cuddling against one another in front of the fireplace.

"Just went out for a quick walk." Lily eyes him suspiciously but gets back to the book laying on her legs. Remus made his way towards the dormitory before James started talking again and he rolled his eyes.

"Moons, come sit with us." He did"t want to be with them. He wanted to be alone with his thoughts to think about what the hell had happened. What did this even mean? They weren't dating or anything and only shared one kiss. Remus sat down, trying to sit as far away from the couple.

"Why do you smell like cigarettes?" Lily suddenly asked. His eyes shot up at Lily and he tried to hide the blush that was heating his face. How could he make such a stupid mistake and how can he possibly explain himself.

"I ummm....smoked?" It came out more as a question like there was a wrong answer to it. She raised her eyebrow and gazed at him for a few seconds.

"Alright," she said with a sigh before reading as if nothing happened. James didn't say anything but winked at him.

"I'm going to take a shower." With that, he stormed out of the common room and quickly found the bathroom to get rid of the cigarette smoke. He prayed that Lily didn't know that Severus smoked because they were friends not so very long ago, better said, they were best friends before that incident. He shook his head to try and gather his thoughts. He stripped down his clothes and turned on the showerhead. He waited not so patiently for the water to get warm and then stepped under it the moment it got hot. Remus" aching muscles started relaxing and he leaned his head against the cold wall. It was weird. Everything was weird.

He managed to screw up the mission in record time and noticed himself falling for the greasy-haired man who he is supposed to hate. He couldn't deny his feelings anymore, especially after this and knew he had to continue with the orders Dumbledore gave him even though he wanted to drop out of it now.

His thoughts wandered off to the moment they were on the Astronomy Tower. Severus" hands ran through his hair while his warm body pressed closer and closer to him. How he was slammed against the wall after the heating argument and the tension they had when they looked into each other"s eyes. His breathing on his neck while talking with that low, seductive and silky voice. Severus had no idea how much power he had over Remus at that moment and definitely didn't see Remus" legs trembling from lust. He had to hold himself in not to rub his half-hard erection against Severus" thigh because he wanted to take things slowly. He wanted to show how much he cared about him and that he wasn't just someone who he tried to get in his bed.

Remus could already imagine the Slytherin boy under his body moaning from sensation. He imagined how he would arch his back, scrape his nails over Remus' back and throw his head back in pleasure. His black hair would fall in front of his face and Remus would push them behind his ear to see his face more clearly. He was pulled out of his fantasy when he noticed his cock getting hard.

"Shit," he whispered to himself. He couldn't jerk off over Severus because that felt utterly wrong but he couldn't help himself. Remus bit on his lower lip and his hand slowly wrapped his fingers around it. He grunted when he started moving up and down at an even pace. This was so wrong but it felt so good.

His thoughts drifted off to the boy he had just made out with. The way he licked his lips after they pulled apart from each other, the soft body pressing firmly against his and the little moan he made from delight was enough to throw him off the edge. Remus' hand went faster and faster, pulling on the foreskin. The bottom lip stuck between his teeth almost started to bleed from the pressure he had on it, trying to keep his moans and groans quiet.

"Fuck." He threw his head in his neck and the warm liquid sprayed the shower wall. Why did this man have so much power over him?

## Chapter fifteen

The curtains got pulled open and the bright sun shined directly in his face. Severus grunted and tried to turn around to the other side and bury his head in his cushion before a hand touched his shoulder.

"Never seen you wake up this late," Mulciber commented with amusement dripping from his voice. Severus blinked a few times and looked around the room to see it was completely empty except for Mulciber's company.

"Must have slept in."

"Well yeah, that's obvious." He rolled his eyes and walked out the door. You couldn't call them friends but they did look after each other which was nice. Of course, the only reason for that is that they would both join the death eaters soon. Severus hadn't made the decision yet but didn't tell many people about that to not make a scene. He knew he would get hate if he ever told others he was doubting about it and they would only try to convince him otherwise which wasn't something he looked forward to.

If he was quick, he might still make it to breakfast. Severus got up at a fast pace but ended up almost fainting and steadied himself with his hand on the mattress. Don't get up so fast, he noted to himself. It was probably a mix from haven't eaten anything yet and the lack of blood that was supposed to be in his body but instead, dripped out of his cuts. He groaned from frustration when he saw the blood leaking through his white nightshirt that would be stained with no doubt.

He locked the bathroom door behind him and ripped off some paper next to the toilet. He could heal the cuts with spells but Severus preferred the muggle ways because he wanted marks. He wanted to feel them and see them because it made him calm down knowing he had this secret that nobody else knew about. He would feel alive.

The bleeding stopped after putting pressure on it long enough and Severus hesitated whether he should shower or not. It would feel nice but he would miss breakfast and made his decision to skip it for once. It wasn't very often that he was actually hungry and Severus had trouble gaining weight so he wanted to take this opportunity to maybe gain a few grams. He threw on the Slytherin robes from yesterday and didn't even look in the mirror to see if he was presentable before running down the corridors to the Great Hall.

The Hall was as crowded as always. People were eating and laughing while the professors were keeping an eye on them. Severus lowered himself to sit down at an empty spot.

"Looks like you had a rough night," Avery snickered. Snape frowned his eyebrows not knowing what he was talking about and Avery scanned his body which made him look down on himself. His Slytherin robes were crinkled, looked like it wasn't washed in forever, his hair was ruffled up from the position he slept in and the right side of his face had marks from the pillow printed on his cheek.

"Sort of."

He wasn't lying. He woke up in the middle of the night covered with sweat and he was breathing heavily from the nightmare. He had joined the Dark Lord and had to prove his loyalty to him by killing someone in front of him. It wasn't just a stranger but it was Remus and he was on his knees, begging for his life.

It pained him to see Remus like that. Severus had to obey the Dark Lord, he had no other choice. He looked around him, to see if anyone was paying attention to him and opened his bag to pull out his notebook. It was small and he preferred it over a sketchbook to draw in so that people won't see what he was drawing.

He mostly sketched animals he saw in the forbidden forest because they looked so special. If you sit very quietly, the animals will come to you and he has a lot of time to observe them and take in every single detail. The reason Severus loved it there was mostly because he didn't have to be afraid of someone seeing him and bothering him. It was like his own world he could escape to, just like the side of the black lake. Not the side Hogwarts Students were familiar with so there was, again, no one to interrupt him. No one to bully him and it was perfect as far as it could be.

Time passed by while he continued drawing. He was drawing Remus and him together. He had no specific reason why he chose to do so but he found him weirdly interesting. He had these perfect brownish locks that were perfect no matter what weather it was. It didn't matter if it was wary or not, it fell just right and had the perfect length and volume. Those eyes were something you could get lost in. They were brown but you could see specks of gold in them if you observed well enough.

He laughed so openly, not afraid to hold it in which was something Severus admired about him. His smile seemed perfect to him and it warmed his heart every time he saw it. The confidence in every single situation stood out and he had the Gryffindor courage even though he wouldn't admit it to himself. Severus was arguing with himself whether he should give the drawing when he was done but wouldn't that be seen as weird? Maybe he could give it at the same time as the ring he bought for Christmas.

The black little box was safely hidden inside his trunk, out of sight for anyone to reach because he knew how noisily his roommates could be. Secretly he hoped that Remus would have something for him too and it wouldn't even matter what it is. He never had a real Christmas present and that was one of the many reasons why he despised it. Severus looked at it as it was just an excuse to lower your guards and get free gifts. People would act like they're happy when they are just putting up a mask to look like they were in the Christmas spirit. He had celebrated it when he was younger, just not properly like all the other children he was jealous of back then.

The next day at school, they would brag about how much they got and how expensive it was. There wasn't a single time where it wouldn't break into a fight and Severus would roll his eyes at them. It was pathetic really to know how desperate some humans are to have an excuse to do nothing. His father would call him lazy if he even had a one day rest from doing chores around the house.

He looked over to the Gryffindor table to see some idiots throwing food at each other and he scrunched his nose up in disgust. It wasn't like he hated it, it was that he wanted to experience such things too but knew he would never have that. Severus had herbology first but hesitated whether he should go or not. He could just skip it and it's not like Sprout would notice, well she would but never informed Dumbledore on his absence. He learned that after accidentally forgetting the time or sleeping in so he was safe. As for the other classes, he didn't have many and wouldn't exactly care if he got detention because it wasn't like his reputation wasn't already ruined. Not to mention, this was a great way to avoid seeing Remus because he had Herbology with Gryffindor.

Severus still had some things to think about and wasn't sure whether it was the right thing to do what they did last night. He desperately wished he could vent about it to Lily but that was no option obviously.

He marched towards the doors to go to the black lake. Severus had planned to stay there all day, enjoying the dangerous, yet fascinating creatures and hoping he had a chance to observe and draw them. His hands were cold but he detested gloves because he couldn't move his fingers freely. Not to mention he couldn't draw! Lily had introduced him to fingerless gloves which first sounded ridiculous to him, he would never embarrass himself with that but later on, he bought a pair just to test them out and grew very fond of them. Severus never wore them in front of others, just another excuse for the Marauders to bully him. It was a small detail but they noticed everything about him and he always felt so exposed when they had a chance to come at him again.

The sun was shining on the pack of snow surrounding Hogwarts which made it sparkle. The trees were covered with a thick layer just like the ground. Luckily, the weather wasn't cold enough to make the black lake freeze. Severus walked over to the famous rock he sat on every time he came here. It gave the best view over the black lake and would be out of sight for students and teachers to see. He sat down and embraced the cold around him, trying not to shiver, he got his notebook out of his bag and began.

## Chapter sixteen

Remus was searching for Severus at Herbology. It was a bold move but he actually wanted to ask him to work together as partners. He had heard from Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw that they were making new groups today for the rest of term which you absolutely could not afford to miss.

Sirius and James skipped one time on the day they also happened to make new ones and it didn't end well the next time they were there. They weren't allowed to work together even though there was no one else and Professor Sprout simply split up another pair and put them together. You would either be extremely lucky or had to live in hell when you didn't show up. Remus hoped Severus was just a tiny bit late and nothing else. Surely he wouldn't be idiotic enough to actually skip it right?

"Settle down everyone!" Professor Sprout raised her hand, trying to get the class attention. It slowly became quieter and soon, there were only whispers that were mostly coming from Sirius and James. Remus rolled his eyes and gave James, who stood next to him, a little nudge against his arm.

"As you may have heard already. Today we will be making new pairs for the upcoming months and after that, we will be learning how to harvest Fluxweed which shouldn't be too difficult. Can anyone tell me what this type of plant is helpful for?"

Lily raised her hand immediately and James got a smirk on his face rather quickly, impressed by her smartness once again. Although Remus tried to pay attention to her answer, his mind drifted to Snape and hoped he would be here before he had no partner anymore. Maybe he could go looking for him if he wouldn't show up in the next five or so minutes and there wasn't really a question about where he could be because Remus knew exactly where he was.

He had seen Severus there multiple times, almost every day and it didn't even matter whether it was pouring and freezing outside or so hot that even with bare skin would make you sweat. Remus would sometimes just study him from a safe distance and would feel guilty about it later on and kept telling himself that it was normal even though he secretly knew he wanted to kiss that pretty face since the first year.

He wasn't attracted to him, well maybe he was but couldn't place it then. He simply adored the man's intelligence and bravery which only grew.

Remus never actually thought about his sexuality because he did date some girls in the past. He had standards to live up to, standards from his parents and his friends so he had to date someone to lower the suspicion but he wasn't sure about being gay before the kiss. He never fantasized about kissing those thin, hard lips but now he did. In fact, he couldn't stop thinking about it no matter how hard he tried.

Professor Sprout announced they could form pairs of two so everybody started to talk with one another and tried to find someone available. James walked over to Lily and tapped her shoulders, saying something Remus couldn't; t quite hear from the distance and saw her smile at him while nodding.

"Ey mate? Wanna be Herbology buddies?" Sirius stood in front of him and blocked his sight of the two lovebirds. He had a smirk on his face, knowing that this year will be good if they worked together.

"I mean....I have to go now," Remus said speedily, wanting to go to Severus and Sirius furrowed his eyebrows.

"Now? Where do you have to go that is more important than your best friend?" He seemed hurt but he couldn't care less about it and pushed him aside to find Severus.

"I'll see you later." With that, he left the group to continue his mission although this talk wasn't even going to be related to the mission at all.

He arrived at his destination. Remus wrapped his scarf tighter around his neck and blew in his hands, desperately trying to keep them from going entirely numb. For the first time, while walking over here, he suddenly got a burst of insecurity. Should he really approach Severus and sit next to him? Maybe he would be mad about that night and hex him the moment he would lay eyes on him but it was worth the shot.

Remus tried to make his coming striking and obvious so he wouldn't frighten the Slytherin boy. Well, it was hardly a boy at this age. Severus had grown a lot in different ways last year, mostly over summer. Remus was actually shocked when he saw him once again after the summer break and he looked like a whole other person. That would maybe be too far but he certainly grew into his features.

His length had increased, he got broader shoulders, long legs and his nose grew into his face, it wasn't as large as it used to be. Remus also thought the longer hair suited him, defining his cheekbones more and outlined his face perfectly. Those eyes were something that just caught his attention every time and he couldn't draw his eyes to look away from it. He had to watch out that it didn't look creepy to Severus to stare at him the entire time.

Remus shook his head in a pathetic attempt to keep his thoughts straight and tapped Severus on his shoulder.

He luckily didn't jump from the sudden company because Remus did make sure he heard him. However, he didn't move at all after he tapped his shoulder and he kept his gaze on the notebook he was hunched over. Remus cleared his throat to try and grab the man's attention.

"You aren't in Herbology," he stated even though he was more curious about what the notebook contained but kept the conversation light.

"Neither are you." Remus snorted. He didn't even think that he was missing it himself too and there was no argument that Professor Sprout would notice the two were missing.

"Fair point." Severus was still blocking Remus' eyesight of the notebook with his body and his pencil hovered above the parchment, barely touching it. It appeared that he had stopped doing whatever he was doing and just simply sat frozen, not moving a limb and he didn't know why. Maybe it was just very private what he was writing or drawing and didn't want to be caught with it.

"What are you writing?" There was a moment of silence and Severus was debating whether he should show him some of his creations and drawings. He never had the chance to show it to anyone but actually, really wanted someone's opinion because what if it was bad? He needed a second opinion but didn't dare to show, afraid of being made fun of even though it was completely normal to draw. It wasn't a crime but it felt like it was and that was mostly because of his father who called drawing for girls.

"I'm not writing." That would hopefully be enough. Remus starred stared at his fingerless gloves that weren't noticeable before.

"Severus Snape. Are you wearing fingerless gloves?" It came out with a hint of tease and he playfully nudged his elbow against his arm. He finally looked up to meet his eyes and he noticed the pink cheeks and tip on his nose and it was rather cute.

"If you're going to mock me you might as well leave," he sneered defensive. While Remus had time to think about the kiss and what he wanted, Severus was still struggling with it. It was between pushing him away or drawing him towards him but that meant risking getting hurt.

"No, I didn't mean it that way. I just never saw you as a type to wear that but it looks cute though." The words came out fast without even realizing what he said and a subtle red took over his face. Luckily, Severus only turned the corners of his lips up, almost smiling which indicated that it wasn't wrong to say that.

"Care to show me what you're holding so very secretly in that notebook of yours?" Remus added quickly so that he didn't have to respond to the last sentence.

## Chapter seventeen

Severus hesitated whether he should show him. It wasn't very special but he did want to show Remus his sketches of him, hoping he wouldn't get mad.

"Yeah sure." Severus decided to start off easy by showing him some simple drawings he made of animals, nothing special really. He flicked through some pages to find some that were finished already because he left a lot unfinished. Mostly because the animals would disappear before having the chance to sketch them but sometimes it was rather boring.

"These are really impressive," Remus noted while eyeing the creations that were made by him. Severus wasn't very good at receiving compliments so just nodded, hoping it didn't come off rude. Saying thank you never sat right for him and felt weird even though there was nothing wrong with it. Maybe it was the fact that Severus suspected people were lying when he did get a compliment, which was rare.

Remus suddenly flipped the pages himself, probably to see some more drawings but before Severus could stop him Remus saw his own drawing. He stared at it for what felt like minutes before looking up at him while Severus prepared himself for a punch in his face that never came.

"Is this me?" Remus wanted to be sure he wasn't misjudging the situation.

"I'm sorry if it makes you feel uncomfortable. I promise I won't do it again," he said as quickly as his tongue could carry the words and hoped this would not ruin their "friendship". Remus furrowed his eyebrows in confusion.

"Don't be silly. You made me look beautiful." The last sentence came out more like a whisper and harder than he anticipated but by the expression on his face, he heard it. His face got a reddish blush on top of the blush that was already their thanks to the cold, snowy weather.

"I just drew what I saw," he rolled his eyes and the voice dripped with sarcasm to try and get out of the situation. Remus had learned that Snape used sarcasm to avoid certain things that made him unpleasant.

"You can have it if you want." Severus pointed at the drawing in the notebook and Remus smiled. He loved everything about how he made it. It was undoubtedly detailed even though it was with a pen which must have been harder. His brown locks were poking out, exactly in the right direction and the eyes were almost real when staring at it. He was deep in thought in the sketch and couldn't help but wonder when Severus took the time to make this because obviously, he had to be observing him draw it. The thought about Severus looking at him created a warm feeling in his stomach.

"Are you sure?" Remus' eyes were gleaming from joy, knowing the boy took interest in him if he truly watched him.

"Yeah it's fine. Don't worry about it." Remus handed Severus the notebook so he could neatly tear the page out of the other hundred of draw filled pages. For a brief moment, their fingertips touched while he gave the piece of parchment. Although, there wasn't much to feel because both their hands were freezing and numb.

Remus folded the piece in half and safely slipped it in the bag he had needed for Herbology. They sat for another fifteen minutes before Remus started to shiver.

"Want to head inside? It's getting rather cold?" Severus smirked when he saw the shivering body next to him and nodded while standing up. He held out his hand for Remus and he took the offer.

His hand was slightly warmer than it was earlier because perhaps because he had his hands stuffed in the pockets from the cloak the entire time. They walked towards the castle hand in hand and neither of them let go until they reached the doors. Remus wiped off some fallen snow from his shoulders and ran a hand through his hair to make it less messy which was a failed attempt. In the meantime, Severus was taking off the gloves and folded them before stuffing them into a pocket. They were both done and stood in front of each other, not really knowing what to do at the moment.

"I have my next class soon so....I guess I see you later?" It wasn't a complete lie. He did have class soon but still had well over ten minutes. Severus nodded like he did most of the time. He never spoke that much, even in their conversations he was mostly the quiet one while Remus didn't stop babbling about everything. It was a shame really, he had such a lovely voice but barely let anyone listen to it.

Severus glanced at their surroundings to make sure there was no one in sight. In the next moment, he leaned forward fairly and placed his hand on Remus' tingling cheek that was still red from the outside world. He sucked in his breath and they both stood in that pose for a good five seconds before Remus muttered "Fuck it" under his breath and closed the distance between their lips. Severus had planned to just give him a fast peck on his lips before saying goodbye but he couldn't let go.

One of Remus' hands was on his hip while the other wrapped around his neck to pull him closer. Severus finally moved the hand on his cheek and wrapped his arms around the waist so their body's were pressed against one another. His heart pounded against his rib cage from excitement and he felt how the thin lips opened up to sneak his tongue in. The hand around Severus' neck curled to get a better grip to stop himself from falling on the ground due to his weakened legs that were barely holding on.

Remus felt Severus' black hair tickle on his face and a soft grunt escaped his lips which vibrated against the other set. It was passionate and yet tender. Severus was the first to let go to catch his breath. His chest was rising up and down in a speedy movement from the lack of oxygen.

He looked around once more to double-check if someone might have seen them but the Corridors were as empty as before. It would even be strange if they did see a person because everyone had classes.

"I'll see you later then." Severus turned his heels and stalked off with his hands now placed in the pockets from his robes with his bag softly bumping against the hip Remus had touched not even seconds ago.

Remus shifted on his foot while waiting for Severus to turn around the corner and made his way towards his next class: Transfiguration.

"Mate! Where have you been? You've missed Herbology." Sirius made a hand gesture towards Remus that looked awfully a lot like a wave. He hadn't thought about how he could explain himself to his friends. Where was he indeed? Saying he was with Snape would definitely end with a fight or Sirius and James who would mock Severus for it. Peter wasn't usually participating with them, he kind of followed the lead and just did everything he was told to do so he wouldn't lose his only friends. He sat down next to Sirius, still pondering about how to answer that question.

"Just needed some fresh air," Sirius smirked which followed with a wink.

"My my Moony, don't tell me you've met a girl?" His cheeks went red. It wasn't even true because he didn't fancy a girl. Better said, he fancied no one but he still went as red as the Gryffindor room. Sirius gasped and pulled Remus closer to himself by his robe.

"Tell me who it is Remus Lupin." His eyes were playful as always. Catching girls was a hobby of his which everybody knew by now. If he wanted, he could have a new girl every day. It was no surprise that literally the entire school took a fancy on the Gryffindor boy. Not only Sirius but Remus had gotten some love letters himself too. He never truly responded to them even though Sirius sometimes forced him to go out with a few of them because he "needed a good shag" as he described it. It could be quite exhausting to try and convince Sirius he didn't need that.

Although Remus did date girls he didn't even fancy just because he wanted to keep his reputation up and didn't want anyone to become suspicious.

"It's no one. Really." Sirius rolled his eyes and focused his attention on two Ravenclaw girls who were sitting in front of them.

Transfiguration went smooth except when James almost turned the teacup into a dangerous creature which McGonagall had stopped just in time. They had a couple more classes to go to before the day would end.

## Chapter eighteen

There was still an hour or two before dinner would start. Remus luckily survived every class with trouble and was now sitting in the dorms with his best friends. He hadn't really thought about where he was going to spend the Christmas Holidays yet. Of course, the most obvious and before laying answer was to go to his parents' house but perhaps he could ask them if he could stay at Sirius' house. It was something Sirius and he discussed a few times, however didn't go through with the plans. It would be fun!

"Pads." Sirius was laying on his belly on the bed with some homework spread around him for the first time. It actually looked like he was doing something useful but Remus noticed he was just staring endlessly at the papers in front of him. James and Peter looked up for a second before focussing on their own tasks again after hearing they weren't addressed.

"Hm?" Was the only sound coming from Sirius?

"Do you remember when you invited me to spend Christmas with you at your house? Does the offer still stand?" Sirius jumped from his bed and walked over to Remus with fast paces and put his hands on his shoulder.

"Are you serious! Of course!" A huge smile appeared on Remus' face and he laughed at seeing the excitement from the other boy in front of him.

"Why don't you want to go to your parents?" Peter asked curiously. He didn't have a reason to not spend it there except for the fact his parents loathed queer people. Remus had no problems with that whatsoever for a few years but then he started questioning his own sexuality in maybe second or third year. He was so confused and never found an answer to his feelings. It wasn't just feelings that didn't seem to add up with his friends, but also the lack of interest in girls. Sirius, James and Peter started early by constantly talking about girls and going out and Remus had problems understanding why they cared so much. He mostly chose a girl that was just....there and it was maybe a bit mean for the people he dated to hang them on a thread, however it felt like he had no choice. This went on for god knows how long and he already dated tons of girls by then.

He found a book in a muggle store one time when his third year was almost over and summer was around the corner. It was a whole book that explained everything about genders and attraction to the same sex. There were even words in it he didn't know existed and was fascinated by learning more. When he did, he found out he may be bisexual or gay. The thought scared him and he tried to deny it but soon came to terms and accepted himself for who he was even though he was still confused sometimes.

"Just not feeling up to it." He shrugged. James furrowed his brows without looking up from his book, trying to make it look like he wasn't eavesdropping on the conversation. James had his uncertainties that he wasn't telling the full truth. It wasn't up to him to tell the others the actual reason in case he was wrong. It was probably because Remus' parents could be rather strict in certain beliefs of others and although he couldn't read Remus' mind, he did draw a conclusion about what it might be.

"Mate. You can always come to me if somethings up, you know that right?" James began to let him know he was there for him no matter what.

"I know. Thanks." He gave a small smile and took a deep breath before continuing with his own assignment.

Remus was glad he had somewhere to go over the holidays. Of course, there would be the choice to stay at Hogwarts however, his parents did not approve of him staying at an almost empty school during the brightest time of the year. He did explain to them Hogwarts celebrated Christmas too with the people who were left behind but it didn't convince his parents enough to let him stay.

He would rather be here while there was almost no one in sight than be with his parents. There was something magical about the grounds when it wasn't filled with thousands of students and was even jealous over the people who could stay even though those people maybe didn't even have a family.

Remus had heard about Snape staying every year. There was no doubt he had a family at home but he never wanted to go there. If it weren't for his own parents being so against queer people, he may have invited Snape over. They technically weren't in a relationship and haven't even talked about the circumstances yet but still, nobody deserves to be alone during the holidays. The Slytherin common room was empty every year with exception of Snape and maybe one other child.

Remus gazed at his trunk under the bed which held the present in it. He was still debating whether to give it to the Slytherin or not. Would he appreciate the gift or throw it in the trash right after opening it? Maybe he wouldn't even bother opening it. It felt like they were going too fast and at the same time, he wanted it to speed up. This was certainly the hardest "friendship" he ever endured and that was coming from him, Sirius could be a pain in the arse too but couldn't live up to Snape's bitterness.

It was finally time for dinner and they made their way towards the Great Hall. Remus sat down next to Peter and Sirius on the other side. James and Lily were sitting next to one another as predicted. As always, the house-elves had outdone themselves with the buffet that was laying in on the tables, making every single person water mouth by looking at it. He scooped some of everything on his plate that was soon covered by the amount of food that created a whole pile.

The Yule Ball was coming closer and closer every day and he still hadn't found a date. He wouldn't bother asking Snape, to spare the humiliation he would face when he said no. That was one reason not to ask him, the other was the judgemental looks he would receive from everyone if he showed up with the greaseball he tormented for years. Not to mention, maybe he would even get uninvited by Sirius for Christmas after seeing his date which meant he was going to be stuck at Hogwarts. It was for the best to find a nice girl instead of a bloke.

Maybe he could ask that one girl from Ravenclaw he was partnered with one time for the year. It pained him to know he didn't even remember her name although he did remember her intelligence and cheery personality. He even dated her for some while but broke up after discovering he did not have real feelings for her and hated to give her false hope.

Remus gazed over the Slytherin table to look for a particularly handsome, greasy headed, soft lipped person.

However, he failed the attempt to actually see him and figured he had skipped dinner once more. It definitely wasn't the first time this occurred and it made him worry because Severus couldn't afford to lose any more weight he already had lost over time. He did notice that every time Severus came back from summer break, it looked like he had lost 20 pounds and slowly gained it over the year. It became some sort of cycle from losing weight and gaining it back and then losing it again.

"Remus. Hello?" Remus' head shot up from his plate of food and he made a humming sound to let the one who called him know he heard it.

"You zoned out." Lily waved at him to make sure he was fully looking at her and Remus followed it with his eyes back and forth.

"Sorry. Been a little distracted lately." Lily continued to glare at him but not in an angry way. She never really got angry that much and once she did, there was no doubt that she was going to kill you. She was actually quite intimidating sometimes and it was best to not piss her off.

"You've missed Herbology. No doubt you get paired up with Snivellus," Peter snorted and nudged his elbow against his side.

"Now that you mention it...." Sirius began and Remus prepared himself for the worst to come "I haven't seen him." Remus felt himself getting sweaty and his hands clam. He made a foolish attempt to wipe the sweaty palms off against his robes and cleared his throat.

"Yeah," he managed to say, luckily without any voice cracks.

## Chapter nineteen

Just when the Great Hall was starting to become more and more abounded, a small brown owl came flying towards Remus. It gracefully landed on the table in front of his nose with a small roll of parchment attached to it.

Remus Lupin

I hope this letter finds you well.

Meet me as soon as you can.

(Have you tried the chocolate pudding already? It's truly delicious)

Headmaster Dumbledore

He mentally slapped himself against his head. How could he forget his big mission?

"You coming Moons?" James stood behind him and Remus quickly rolled up the parchment to avoid any suspicions from his friends.

"Dumbledore wants to speak to me but I'll see you in the dorm okay?" James gave a small nod in acknowledgement and followed Sirius, Peter and Lily out of the Great Hall. He was worried about what Dumbledore might say, especially after hearing Remus hadn't found out any information about the Slytherin boy. He nervously made his way towards the Headmaster's office while fumbling with the hem of his robe. The trip was shorter than Remus had wanted it to be and he stood outside to gather up the courage.

Of course, this should not be something he had to be concerned about but he was afraid Dumbledore saw them kiss or suspected something more than a "friendship" if you could even call it that. His hand scratched the backside of his neck and he switched his weight from one foot to the other. It was rarely achievable to keep himself from moving. Merlin! He couldn't even sit or stand still for ten seconds.

His friends occasionally pointed it out when they were in class or just in the Gryffindor Tower and he had to admit to himself, it was quite noticeable if you hung out with him a lot. He adopted this feature a year before Hogwarts. Remus didn't remember much about the time where he could sit still for multiple hours at the time and craved to have it that way again. He had his mind occupied with everything he ever did in his life. There was always something to stress about, whether it was an assignment due before class or the foolish thing he said a week ago to some person he barely knew. Sirius had told him to stop worrying about it as if that advice would help.

It felt like he wasn't even trying to understand Remus which made him feel like he didn't even care. He knew better than that though because Sirius did care. It was his best friend so how could he not? Maybe they haven't completely been on the same line the last couple of months but friends don't have to agree with each other. Remus even forgave him when he pulled out that nasty prank in the shrieking shed. Of course, it took a while for him but James and Peter convinced him to talk with Sirius after a few days of ignoring his existence. He had actually wanted Sirius to apologize. However, he was too stubborn and Remus knew he had to make the first move if they wanted to remain their friendship. You couldn't just throw away years of fondness so it was really the only choice he had. It wasn't like he had other friends to hang out with and it was obvious that James and Peter would choose Sirius over him.

A group of Slytherins walked by and he got pulled out of his thoughts. He made his way up to the office and waited patiently after knocking for an: "Enter".

"Come in." He heard Dumbledore's voice on the other side of the door and opened it without a sound, poking his head through the entrance. Dumbledore was sitting behind his desk, looking at Remus with a twinkle in his blue eyes. Why did his eyes always twinkle? He asked himself again.

"Ah. You made it. Take a seat, my boy." His hands were intertwined with each other and he motioned towards the chair in front of the desk. Remus quickly seated himself and took a brief moment to look at his surroundings, anywhere that wasn't in Dumbledore's direction.

"How are classes? I've been informed you weren't at today's class from Professor Sprout." Remus hadn't even thought about that yet. It was no surprise she would inform the Headmaster that he wasn't at Herbology.

"I'm sorry. It wasn't my intention to miss it but something came up. I know that's not an excuse though," he responded immediately.

"Something more important than class?" Dumbledore didn't look mad but his questions made Remus rethink that.

"Er- I don't know?" What was he supposed to answer? He didn't know what Dumbledore wanted to hear and he was too nervous to make whole sentences at this moment.

"I'll let it slip but don't let it happen again." He avoided the eye contact Dumbledore tried to make with him and he coughed while looking at the floor. His hand scratched the back of his neck.

"And how are things going with Severus?" He knew this was going to be brought up in the conversation but he wasn't prepared well enough yet.

"I haven't found anything so far." It remained quiet and neither of them had anything to say.

"Very well. Do you have anything else you wish to speak about?" Remus shook his head and Dumbledore dismissed him from his office. It could have been worse.

## Chapter twenty

The days flew by rather quick and it was only one day before Yule Ball and Christmas break. Everyone was excited and the Christmas spirit was already there. There were tons of people who made a big gesture to ask their crush to the Ball except for Severus. He could not fool himself into believing that Remus would actually accept and he wouldn't just humiliate himself in front of the school.

Lupin was nice, attractive, his smile was the prettiest sight he ever saw, his eyes sparkled every time he talked about something he liked and he made Severus' heart skip a beat. It was weird to feel this way. It was not like him to want someone in that way and it was definitely against his father's rules. Father did not approve of most things but the hate towards people liking the same gender was one of the biggest. Severus had nothing to worry about until now. He always kept his life private and never told his father anything but one time he caught him singing along with a song from Taylor Swift when he was at home and he was not pleased to hear him knowing the lyrics of that song, better said: he detested that his own son was even listening to that crap.

The result that evening were several marks on his back and silent sobs throughout the night in his room. His father kept repeating the same sentence over and over again: I did not raise a fag. You're a disgrace to the family!

Oh, how glad Severus was when summer break would be over and it would be the first day back to Hogwarts. Of course, he constantly worried about his mother but not for long after she passed away. It broke Severus. Neither did it help when his father started blaming him for her death and the worst part was that he started to believe the words.

Holidays like there were never something to celebrate. It was a pathetic excuse to be lazy and take things for granted. When Remus admitted that he absolutely loved Christmas was confusing Severus. Why would anyone willingly want to spend more time with their family? No, Christmas just wasn't something for him. It wasn't made for people that grew up like him: Poor.

He shook his head and continued pushing his food around on his plate. This was the final day before classes would officially be over for another week or so and tomorrow evening would be the Yule Ball. The Great Hall was as joyful it could be. Somehow it made him feel more alone to see all those happy people around him. It made him wonder why he wasn't acting like them and why he couldn't seem to be happy like the humans around him. He sighed and supported his head on his left elbow, staring at nothing in particular. Severus had seen Remus walk in fifteen minutes ago with Lily, James, Sirius and Peter.

Just the normal club and nothing special. He thought back about the gift the old woman gave him that day and was pondering whether to give it but decided that if there was a good moment, he would do it. He had to stop with the self-loathing and pity. He may be a Slytherin but the Gryffindor courage wasn't something he was lacking, in most cases that is.

There were some situations he cowered out and was too afraid but that was mostly with his father. There was likely a chance to give Remus the present but it didn't matter because time would tell. There was no need to rush things. It still made him wonder why he cared for the Gryffindor boy so much. Was it simply because Remus showed the tiniest signs of affection that Severus craved or was it just because he was slowly losing his mind. There was no way this "thing" going on between them was more than a joke to Remus right? Even though he stated clearly it wasn't, he had his doubts. Luckily he didn't have classes today except for Defence Against the Dark Arts and Herbology as yesterday. Of course, he did not forget he had skipped it and was not looking forward

to the consequences.

Remus saw Severus stare at the blank void and wondered what was wrong. Probably nothing but he was not acting like his normal self even though he rarely behaved like those nights when they were alone. It was weird seeing him switch personality so fast as if he did this his entire life. Remus couldn't deny that he did not adjust his own personality around his friends but never as extreme as Severus. He guessed it was to keep him safe, the same reason he did it. He wiped off his sweaty hands on his robes when his train of thought drifted off to the Yule Ball. His friends knew he hadn't found a date to go with yet and constantly kept nagging about it while Remus rolled his eyes at them, telling them to stop. He wanted to ask Severus but he clearly showed no interest in the holidays. Even though he knew Severus would reject him, he would try to get to know him more and make him trust Remus for his mission.

That was the only reason Remus wanted to go to the Yule Ball with Severus right? He wanted to prove himself to Dumbledore and show what he was capable of and that was the only reason why he enjoyed the Slytherins company. The present he bought him for Christmas was nothing more than something to earn his trust with.

Double potions were exhausting already. Especially when you just woke up and it's too early in the morning to even function properly. Sirius kept making jokes instead of focussing on the potion itself and it really hit something in Remus that almost made him snap multiple times at Sirius' reckless behaviour around such dangerous ingredients.

He wished he was partnered with Lily. She learned a lot in the past few years after watching and listening to Severus so long. It made his stomach feel twisted when he thought about Severus and Lily being best friends with each other. He couldn't be jealous though. He refused to be jealous, he stated to himself.

"Sirius! Can you sit still for more than one bloody second," Remus sneered after trying to concentrate on the chopping while Sirius almost knocked his knife on the floor?

"Ah! Sorry moons." He rolled his eyes and started grinding the Occamy eggshell for Felix Felicis. It's a rather hard potion and needs constant attention but with Sirius next to him was making it quite a challenge. Remus added the eggshells and slowly stirred them around in the cauldron. Maybe he could ask Severus as a tutor. He knew much easier ways to make potions because he saw his potions book. Almost every recipe had comments next to it and things that were angrily crossed out. Until now, the potion was looking decent and he mentally complimented himself for not fucking it up.

"It looks good, mate," Sirius smirked and gave a pat on Remus' back before winking at the staring girls almost across the classroom. Their giggles after the wink were hearable even at their side and Slughorn silenced them. Remus wiped his hands off of a towel and turned to face Sirius.

"Can you add the final ingredient? A sprinkle of powdered common rue," he read from the advanced potions book. He nodded and Remus walked over to Slughorn to announce they were done. It wasn't until he hardly took two steps and Slughorn who was yelling at someone that he added too much to the potion until a loud explosion took place. Remus had little to no time to turn around to see what had happened but saw a glimpse of Sirius' shocked face. Everyone took cover, mostly under the tables and Remus pulled Sirius away from the danger just in time. The loud bang followed and they heard people screaming and some were even on the verge of crying.

## Chapter twenty one

"I apologized a thousand times already. I'm sorry Remus." Sirius threw his hands in the air and Peter and James were watching the show a few meters away from them to avoid getting involved in the fight. Sirius didn't measure it right which had caused the explosion and luckily, everyone survived without getting hurt. It was a miracle they were all grateful for. Of course, Remus was furious and so was Slughorn. He dismissed the class after checking no one was harmed and gave Sirius detention for two months. Remus wished he could forgive the stupid mistake but there were so many foolish mistakes his friend made and he always forgave him for that but he was done protecting him. Especially after Severus talked with Remus about it that he wasn't responsible for his friend's actions, no matter what it was.

"I know you are but I'm not ready to forgive you," he said stubbornly.

"Hold on. You are kidding me, right? It was a mistake." James was meddling with the conversation after trying so hard not to.

"Yeah. You have to forgive him," Peter squeaked. Sirius nodded in agreement but Remus didn't give in yet.

"No. You know what. I just need some time apart from you." With that, he walked out of the common room and had no idea where to go. He originally still had Herbology but the people who had double potions were free for the day after having such a big shock. He heard Sirius faint grunt from the room and Remus rolled his eyes even though there was no one to see it.

He strode towards the library, still angry at the events from today. The worst part was that Yule Ball was tomorrow and now his friends and he were fighting. Well, only Sirius but seeming they were so close with each other, they would meddle with it which they had already done.

What was he even supposed to do with the Christmas holiday now? It would be weird to visit Sirius if they were in the middle of a fight and Remus wasn't ready to forgive him yet. He briefly considered asking James if he could stay over but that was out of the question. He wouldn't say no but he did not want to intrude. Lily's parents would immediately say no to the request and Peter was out of the question. He sighed and sat down on one of the empty chairs. His bag was next to him with his books for the day which was mainly unused today. Of course, staying at Hogwarts was always an option.

Returning to his parents definitely wasn't because they would be pissed hearing Remus was going to be home. They loved him home without a doubt but not when he would let them know that so late. He didn't know whether to hate his parents or love them. His father only talked about his "condition" and what he could and could not do. Always talked about how he should be careful because he was different. It was almost like his father saw nothing else than the werewolf that came once a month and his mother didn't argue with his father about it. They claimed that they truly loved him and cared for him but they had a funny way in expressing it.

Remus took out a book from his bag without even looking at the cover to see which one it was and opened it on a random page. The library started to fill with more people and Remus wondered whether classes were over already. He buried his head back in his book and started reading where he was before getting distracted by the people. After a while, someone came to sit next to him which grabbed his attention and he looked up to see who was next to him. Surprised as he was, it wasn't Sirius but Severus.

"What happened? I heard something like a potion accident?" Severus rolled his eyes and turned his body more towards Remus.

"Sirius," he murmured. Severus gave an understanding nod and took out some books for himself and got to work without saying another word to him.

"Er- Can I ask you a question?"

"Say it Lupin," he said irritated.

"Are you staying here for Christmas?" Remus had time to think and decided to stay at Hogwarts and it would be even better if Severus would be staying too.

"Why the sudden interest?" He arched his brow and shoved his book further away to lay his elbows on the table.

"Oh no reason," he scratched the back of his neck and Severus' followed the hand with his eyes.

"I just wondered because I'm staying here too so er- yeah," Severus smirked and lowered his head to hide his blush.

"What changed?"

"Sirius is being a bastard as usual and well, I would rather not stay with my parents. Besides, it would be fun being with you all week. With almost no people around the castle." He winked and Severus briefly looked away while clearing his throat.

"Should be fun."

The day flew by and Remus had simply ignored Sirius. It was a hard task because his friends were still hanging out with the both of them. Sirius had tried to convince him to go to his house with Christmas but he refused every time he offered. It was the next day already and Yule Ball was approaching for them all. The Great Hall was filled with people and some house-elves were already preparing for the dance.

Even more, wizards were asking witches and some were even the same gender couples even though most people scoffed when they heard someone asking the same sex. The wizarding world was still very against it, well most people at least. Remus knew James would support him even though he had nothing with it but if it was his best friend, he certainly wouldn't leave him over such a silly thing. Sirius was quite susceptible about it and he wondered whether he would ever tell him.

## Chapter twenty two

"Wake up, sleepyhead!" The soft blanket was pulled away from him and Severus looked to Regulus.

"What are you doing? We don't have classes." Regulus only gave him a cheeky grin and then revealed something he had behind his back. It was a beautiful black suit and a green one with a silver tie to match.

"What's that?" He rolled his eyes and shoved the suit in Severus' arms, almost suffocating him when the fabric fell over his face.

"Don't be so oblivious. Yule Ball, of course. Lucius and I managed to get you something and don't worry, it fits." Severus dragged a hand over his face and shoved the suit back in Regulus' arms.

"I'm not going."

"Don't be weird! This is the biggest event of the year. You're going." He practically threw the suit at Severus and Severus winced seeing him be so careless with something so expensive.

"I have no one to go with...."

"I'll be there. Lucius will be there. Bellatrix and Narcissa too! Don't be such a prat, it's gonna be fun." He rolled out of bed and neatly laid the black suit down and strode towards the bathroom. He almost went and shut the door but he poked his head out, gazing at Regulus.

"I'll be there. But don't expect me to socialize with others."

"Wasn't expecting anything different," Regulus smirked and walked out of the room to give Severus some privacy.

He lathered his hair with the newly bought shampoo. His entire body would smell like a whole damn tropical rainforest when he would be done with showering. He rinsed the shampoo and body wash from his skin and stepped out of the shower, immediately wrapping himself in a warm towel. With that on his waist, he walked to his bed whistling. Everyone was already out so he would be alone in the room. It didn't matter if he only walked out with a white towel around his torso, hair still dripping from the water. Just when he walked out, he heard a voice snicker.

"Gorgeous," the voice said. Severus snapped his head towards the direction the voice came from to stare wide-eyed at Lupin. He tried to hide his panic but yelped and ran back into the bathroom, slamming the door closed. Remus knew Severus was showering, Lucius had said so. He came to see if he had the dark mark but his left arm was hidden behind his back for some reason, which only made him more suspicious about it.

"Lupin! Haven't you heard of knocking? How did you come in here anyway?" He yelled through the door while looking around in the bathroom for a sign of clothes. Unfortunately for him, there was nothing and he let his head fall back against the door.

"One of your Slytherins let me in. Lucius?" He cursed himself, of course, Lucius would let him in after hearing stories about Remus from him.

"What do you want?" There was a moment of silence from the other side.

"Can you please come out?" Severus hesitated and shifted on his feet. He had nothing except for the towel. Remus could see almost every inch of his ugly, scarred body. He knew that once he saw what he really looked like, Remus would run away from him screaming. Maybe he was over exaggerating, but it wouldn't be the first time.

"Can you close your eyes?"

"Closed them." Severus took a deep breath, hand twisting on the doorknob and trusting Remus to hold his promise. He opened the door and Remus was with his back towards him and eyes squeezed closed.

"Keep them closed until I'm dressed." Remus nodded with understanding. Severus worked as fast as he could, quickly picking up the robes he wore yesterday even though it smelled. He didn't want Remus to suddenly open his eyes and definitely didn't want to see the disgusting expression his face will make.

"You can look." Remus spun around with a grin on his face and opened his eyes.

"Why so shy?" It was meant to be a joke but Severus glared at him through narrow eyes, letting him know it wasn't funny.

"What do you want?" He threw his hands up in defence.

"Sorry! I was just coming to ask if I'll see you at the Yule Ball." A silence overcame. "You are coming aren't you? If I don't see you, I'll come looking for you and drag you by the arm. I'm even so willing to carry you." He laughed and Severus just sighed while rolling his eyes.

"I'm coming. But not for longer than necessary."

"Okay great! That's all I'm asking from you."

"Can you please get out now? I'll see you soon." Remus waved goodbye and turned his back towards him, glancing one time over his shoulder before walking out. He really thought this would work, but it didn't. This was going to be harder than he thought. In the meantime, Severus cursed to himself and dropped himself on the bed. How much of his body had been seen by the man? It didn't look like he saw his left arm but one couldn't say for sure. Maybe he was hiding his shock. He held his arm in front of himself, looking at the fine lines that were looking red and irritable. He really needed to be more hygienic if he wanted to avoid getting an infection. He couldn't afford to go to Poppy and explain himself. He shook his head and went to the Great Hall for breakfast.

Most students were still sleeping. He would have done the same if it wasn't for Regulus waking him so early. At least he could sit peacefully without being disturbed by the Marauders or someone in his own Slytherin house. Just at that moment, James and his gang came walking in. Remus followed them with a book tucked under his right arm, laughing cheerfully with the joke James made.

Sirius said something to Remus but he turned his head to ignore him. Whatever happened must be bad if he was still ignoring him after a full day or two. Severus looked up to the staff table to see Dumbledore winking at Remus. What was that all about? It was as if everything changed in just a matter of a couple of days, which was weird and unusual. What did he expect out of this anyways? That he'll get into a relationship with Lupin and somehow live happily ever after. No, his friends would hate him and turn Severus into saying he used an illegal love potion on him against Lupin's will. He knew Lupin would have to choose between them eventually, The Marauders or him....He already knew which one it was going to be. that's why he lowered his head and had no intention in

talking with Lupin at the Yule Ball. He's going to appear for a minute or ten and get out of there as quick as possible.

Severus had hidden the whole day for everyone, especially a certain Gryffindor. He was nervous enough already and didn't need any more pressure. He had sat in a different spot than the usual tree, knowing people would find him easily there. Instead, Severus found another spot with a view on the black lake where no one would see him. It was the same place he sat multiple times to draw the creatures. that's exactly what he was planning to do at the moment, draw more creatures, add more details and lines. He had some unfinished ones and hoped to see the same species, although there was little chance. Severus hummed with some random song he remembered and drew, slowly losing the time.

## Chapter twenty three

Remus shifted nervously on his feet while scanning himself through the mirror. His hair was an untamed mess on his head and he tried everything. Nothing seemed to work nor was strong enough to tame it. The suit, on the other hand, was perfect just like predicted. His parents had sent him some earlier this year because they wanted him to have the best time at the Yule Ball. That's what his parents did.

They gave him presents and stuff every child would wish to have while secretly, all he craved was their attention. They didn't give him the attention unless they had another experiment that may or may not cure his furry problem. It was a lost cause anyway. He himself gave up a long time ago thinking there was a cure for it. Someone would have discovered it by now. His parents, mostly his father, hadn't given up yet which was getting on his bloody nerves. The things they did sometimes weren't pleasant and haunted him in his sleep.

"You ready, moons?" a hand came on his shoulder and Remus peered at the person through the mirror. James had a bright smile on his face.

"Too bad you don't have a date, but don't worry. We'll keep you company." He nodded even though he knew James would be too busy snogging Lily and Peter would most likely have a date with some girl. Sirius probably chose the most beautiful one from the whole Gryffindor like he always did, but why should Remus care? They weren't talking to one another.

"Yes thank you." He managed to squeeze out of his tight throat filled with anxiety. The snow was more than usual and Dumbledore warned the students this morning over breakfast that it would be unwise to go outside. And if you did, you couldn't be out for long and had to wrap yourself up. He knew that there would be people going outside to do whatever they wanted to do.

His friends were gone already, to the Yule Ball, while Remus gathered up the courage to go. He had done things like this before, of course, he did. But this time was different because Severus would be there.

He arrived and took in his surroundings. It was beautiful, just like expected. They really did a marvellous job decorating it. People were dancing, laughing and talking. Some were sitting at the tables and some were stuffing their faces full with the buffet on the table. Music topped it all off. His eyes darted across the spacious room to look for any sign of the certain Slytherin he hoped would come like he said.

Someone behind him cleared his throat and he spun around with the heel of his feet to see whoever it was.

"You came?" An eye roll was Severus' way of confirming the answer. Remus now saw him in the suit for the first time. It was mostly black but with some subtle silver in it and the tie was the colour of his house: Slytherin green. He couldn't help but admire every detail of the neat young man in front of him. Even with the sneer written on his face, his eyes constantly darting around the room with the hope they weren't being noticed by a group of Gryffindors and the nervous shuffle of his feet he was unaware of, he looked absolutely stunning. Remus could see Severus took his time getting ready from the way his hair had been carefully tied back with a leather tie to show off his distinguished features. Several, soft locks of hair were hanging loose or on the verge of it because his hair was apparently a bit too short for the tie to hold it all together. Remus shook himself out of his thoughts when Severus' frown deepened in confusion when he merely stared.

"Look, if you changed your mind about coming together, I can leave. You can have fun with your friends," The last thing was spit out like something filthy, although Remus couldn't blame him after everything the Marauders, including him, dragged him through. He was, however, feeling that sorrow feeling in his stomach because Severus still refused to believe he was sincere in all his actions, he was sincere about wanting to be with him, about wanting to know him. And even with all those feelings that were indescribable and running through his mind, he did his best to ignore the tiniest evil spot in his heart that told him he was merely doing this to find out Severus' true motives.

Whether he was a Death Eater or not, what side he was playing for and which side he would end up betraying when war was near. They all knew it was going to happen, they just chose to ignore it. They were barely young adults themselves, children, and shouldn't be weighted with the anxiety of what was on the edge of happening.

So he shook his head, frantically, because he didn't want Severus to leave. And now it wasn't for the reason he anticipated it to be at the beginning, to find out his secrets, but because he enjoyed the company. So Remus held out his hand as Severus raised an eyebrow in wonder.

"Dance with me." As he expected, Severus wasn't one to negotiate and wouldn't change his mind if he finally chose. Remus tried to hide his disappointment by plastering on a little fake smile when Severus said no, almost immediately. As if he was disgusted at the idea of dancing with him in front of others.

"No," but before Remus could do anything other than the fake smile, he was talking again, "for one, I can't dance. Two, I'm not going to ridicule myself in front of others." He was relieved to at least hear he wasn't opposed to the idea of dancing with Remus and was glad he didn't lie around the fact he couldn't dance.

"I can teach you," he said, excitement barely filtered out of his voice. Severus rolled his eyes and wanted to refuse, or resist but Remus grabbed his hand, noting how he flinched off the abrupt touch and dragged him out of the hall. Severus half-ran after him to try and keep up with him who was still holding his hand in an iron grip. Hands that were clammy from build-up sweat, soft as it was soaked in silk and that had absorbed in the skin.

Remus didn't have a plan, although soon came up with one when he was busy glancing around him on the way out of the hall. People were staring with disbelief, wide eyes or simply laughing or gossiping that he was touching the clumsy teenager. They never interacted with each other without malice so this was definitely a sight that would go around the entire school in mere minutes. Severus wanted to warn him, which he did, but Remus ignored his protests. "People are looking," Or "Remus, stop. Don't ruin your status," or even, "I don't deserve you." And that's when Remus felt guilty for the original plan and pushed it down his guts in an effort to ignore it once again. Sirius's mouth went slack when he saw them and he let the girl now in his arms for slow dancing go, and she nearly fell and glared at him with anger.

The music faded, so did the laughing and the talking, as they went through empty corridors. Occasionally, they came across a small group of students on their way to the Yule Ball. They'd be giggling or talking about their dates waiting for them and would stop once they saw them coming around the corner. Remus and Severus. Gryffindor and Slytherin. The rest of the Marauders weren't visible, so Remus decided not to spend too much attention on them and continued to lead him through the empty halls.

When they arrived at the front doors that led them through the cold, he opened them without thinking. They didn't have any jackets, nor other clothing to keep them warm such as mittens. It

was dark outside, gloomy with mist around them even with snow falling down in little flocks. Severus shivered immediately when the dry air rushed over them and the doors closed behind them, the only sparkle of light. Regardless, the snow under their feet was white enough to reflect the shine of the moon above them and they were grateful for being able to see where they put their own feet.

The snow crunched underneath them, Severus hadn't said a word since he knew Remus wasn't going to answer. He could see how he was trying to refrain himself from sneering at him that it was cold, or that he wanted to go back, or wanting to demand why the fuck they were outside. Until Remus turned around to face him and took both of his hands in his with a smile on his face, sincere, not fake.

"I'm going to teach you."

## Chapter twenty four

Severus couldn't help but feel warmth rush into his cheeks and was extremely aware of the picture it created. Probably two, ugly red blotches on his pale face. He cleared his throat to hide his discomfort and let his head hang forwards so that his long hair fell in front of his face. He merely hoped Remus didn't notice it. It was just unfortunate that Remus chose that moment to reach out to his hair, twisting it around with his finger and then tucked it behind his ear so that the left side of his face was now fully visible.

"You look absolutely stunning," Remus whispered. He knew Severus didn't have much self-esteem, especially after that first fateful night. He knew the Slytherin didn't like exposing his skin or his body for that matter, always in the long heavy robes. He didn't participate in certain activities that involved having to shed his outer robe, or anything that would expose his dark mark.

"Shut up," Severus growled, not daring to look up, "I don't." Remus smiled sadly and lifted his chin with his finger. They were so close their noses were nearly touching and their lips were inches away from each other.

"Yeah you do, fucking gorgeous." He gave him a small kiss on the cheek and took a step backwards. Severus' head snapped up in concern that he was going to leave but he didn't take more steps than that one. Remus carefully took both of his hands in his and guided them on his shoulder.

"Wrap them around my neck," He ordered against his ear. Severus shivered with delight and anticipation and his fingers momentarily clenched on the fabric of his suit. He slowly slid them over his shoulders and laid them together behind his neck.

Remus smiled at how uncertain and stiff the movements appeared but he was about to change that. He quickly wrapped his arms around the too thin torso and felt a brief twist in his stomach when Severus flinched. His throat let out a strange giggle and he tightened his grip, pushing their bodies flush against each other. He mesmerized the feeling of having him in his arms by running his hands up and down his back. He wasn't pleased to feel the bones of his spine and frowned but didn't say anything. He shouldn't worry about this, this wasn't what he signed up for. This was all to prove his point and make sure Hogwarts was one person safer.

"You just have to sway with the beat of the music." Severus huffed a laugh against his ear, moist breath came in contact with his earlobe and he ran a tongue over his top lip.

"I don't hear any music." Indeed, Remus hadn't thought about that. Now that he looked around, their entire surroundings were leaning towards pitch black if it wasn't for the white snow helping them see where they were.

With a new idea popping up in his head, he smiled and began humming something. Severus relaxed in his grip and leaned in while Remus began to shuffle them right to left. It was hard when the snow was sticking to the underside of their shoes and made them stuck in their place because they'd trip over the white substance if they took one step too far.

He continued humming and at first, everything was stiff, mostly Severus, although he didn't comment on it. But after a while, he seemed to trust him more and slowly let his cheek fall against his chest. Remus felt the sudden increase of warmth and weight on his chest but couldn't look down since he'd collided his chin against the top of his head so instead rested his cheek on Severus' hair.

The humming of a non-existent song became careless and more amusing. He could hear the little snuffles from Severus every time he tried to keep in his laughter, he heard the occasional mutter that he couldn't hum and the other little words he failed to hear properly. Eventually, Remus' voice faltered more and more whenever Severus made another comment or sound. He finally lost it when Severus murmured; "You should never be a singer." He laughed aloud in the silence of the night. The next thing he knew, he tripped over his own shoes and tumbled forwards. He saw the frightening facial expression on Severus' face when they fell down in the soft snow. They both gave a yelp from surprise which was followed by the sound of Severus' back collapsing with the snow and Remus' body falling on top of Severus.

Remus wasn't hurt much and stared down at Severus to make sure he was okay. He had his eyes squeezed shut and a groan escaped him.

"Jesus, Remus. You could've warned me you wanted to jump my bones," and opened his eyes to stare at him with amusement. Remus let out a snort and pushed himself up on his elbows that were now on either side of Severus' head. Their faces were on the same level and he took in the beautiful blush on his cheeks, the black ruffled hair spread around him and contracting with the white underneath, the tip of his was red and the slightly parted lips so he could breathe better in this weather.

Just when he leaned in to kiss him thoroughly, something incredibly cold, as cold as snow, was thrown in his neck. His eyes went wide as he quickly placed a hand on the back of his neck to feel a bump of snow. He threw it off and scowled at Severus.

"You need to pay better attention, Lupin." He smirked. Remus bit the inside of his cheek and reached over to grab a handful of snow, lucky enough it was the sticky kind. But Severus took the opportunity to crawl away on his hands and knees. He laughed openly when Remus turned around and glared at him.

"No, you get back here." Severus shrieked and struggled up onto his feet after grabbing his own handful of snow and ran behind a small, broken wall to hide.

"Sev! I'm going to take revenge," He yelled through the darkness. "You won't get away with this." Remus seemed to have lost him and the moment he put his back to him, Severus jumped from his hiding spot and threw the snowball which fell against Remus and proceeded to crumble apart from the hard hit. He turned around when he felt it and as fast as he could, he threw his own towards Severus who ducked again.

They continued to chase after each other until they were both panting, sweating even from the cold, and their hands were completely numb. Severus pulled him down onto the ground and they made a truce, then made it up by making snow angels for one another. They lay like that until Remus turned his head, cupped Severus' cheek and kissed him. His tongue slipped inside that hot mouth and he couldn't help but moan. He didn't know what this was, what his feelings were.

He was confused and seemed to not understand the difference between doing certain things for his mission and things he did simply because he wanted to. He had to admit that Severus was getting more handsome by the day, that he loved to see him draw with his back hunched and his fingerless gloves. He loved seeing the tip of his tongue poke out during concentrating on a potion, or his little giggles, snuffles and laughs if he was in a good mood. And why did he do this extra trouble, was it to get closer to him? Remus didn't know, although he needed to sort it through before taking the next step. He couldn't fall in love with a death eater, right?

## Chapter twenty five

He felt content with his life. It was peaceful to be nearly alone at Hogwarts because most students went home for Christmas. Even with the Marauders not having a way to bully him and his dorm mates not making fun of him, he wasn't able to keep away from the blade. It grew more severe, in fact. He would wake up in the morning, go to the bathroom and make several new cuts on his wrists. He'd sighed deeply after each one and then showered because the sting was better then.

Needless to say, perhaps it had something to do with his growing anxiety to be alone with Remus. He didn't go home either and he was glad about it, of course, but somewhere he felt like being alone with him for too long would bring bad luck. He hated thinking like that, but he couldn't help it.

Another day went by with quietness. Remus and he spent the entire day together, mostly him forcing Severus to do things but it was fine either way. They went outside for another snowball fight, had breakfast and lunch with a couple of other students and two staff members, Remus forced him to draw him and he happily obliged. It was a decent day but he felt the numbness come back when it was evening and he was alone in the Slytherin dorm. In total, there were two other Slytherins staying but they were both second years. He went to bed as usual and fell asleep rather quickly even with his nerves for the next morning when presents would be received and given. He wondered if Remus bought anything for him.

It wasn't long before he woke up with a startle. At first, he thought someone had just made too much noise and woken him by accident but he felt nerves settling in his stomach. It was completely dark and he had his dorm room for himself. He could see vague outlines from the furniture and sat up in his bed to grab his wand. He heard something, he was sure of it. He stayed quiet. His fingers tightened around the wand and he did his best to hold in his breath.

It was then that he was startled with a hand on his shoulder. With the reflexes he was forced to learn from when he was younger, to protect himself against his father and the men on the street that tried to harass him several times, his left hand wrapped around the unknown throat and he rolled him over on the bed. He straddled his waist, left hand still around the neck and his wand pressed against a soft cheek. The unknown figure let out a high pitched yelp when he was suddenly pinned down and threatened.

"Who the fuck are you," Severus hissed in a dangerous tone.

"It's me!" The man apparently yelled, and Severus immediately recognized the voice.

"Remus. What the fuck are you doing." He quickly cast a Lumos and it immediately went on. He could now clearly see the boy underneath him with squinted eyes and a groan from the bright light inches away from his face pressed against his face. Severus muttered an apology and softened the spell to make the light less sharp.

"If I knew you'd have such reflexes I wouldn't have surprised you," He humoured with a smile. Severus rolled his eyes and unwrapped the hand around his throat and sat back on his heels, still straddling the waist.

"I have something for you." Severus was about to ask what that might be but didn't have time because Remus urged him out of bed and handed him a pile of clothes.

"These aren't mine," Severus bit back when he was pushed towards the bathroom by his boyfriend.

“I know,” Remus reflected. The door closed behind him with a sharp slam and he was left alone in the bathroom and a pile of unknown clothes in his hands. They were normal so he could live with them, although they seemed a size or two too big. Since he was trash in Transfiguration, he shrugged it off and began to redress from his pyjamas into the clothes. It started with light brown slacks, surprisingly not too long and it hugged his legs nicely, and a white blouse with a black tie, which was too big.

He'd never seen Remus wear the slacks or any of that material in general, so they must be new, borrowed or simply never worn before. He scowled when he made a third attempt by tucking the white blouse into the pants. He was getting frustrated but eventually left it half tucked in and a bit messy. Lastly was the tie and that one was rather easy. He felt uncomfortable in short sleeves and looked around the bathroom to see if there was something to cover up with. When there wasn't, he had no other choice than to ask Remus. He unlocked the door and pushed it open enough for him to look through it with one eye.

“Remie,” He whined sweetly. The boy had occupied the bed and was paging through his sketchbook but Severus didn't mind it anymore since he'd seen it all anyway. Remus looked up at him with a smile and scanned what he could see, barely anything with the half-closed door.

“Yes?”

“Can you hand me that vest?” He pointed towards the suitcase and on top of that lay some more books and a black vest. Remus actually wanted to refuse because this would be an opportunity to see his left arm but also because he wanted to see Severus in something else than his occasional cover-ups.

“But that'll ruin the outfit!” He protested. Severus rolled his eyes in annoyance and had no patience left.

“Please.” He sighed and closed the sketchbook to hand him the black vest and Severus greedily took it. The door closed the next second and moments later he came out with the fine fitting slacks, the button up with the tie and over that a black vest that shouldn't really be there. Remus refrained himself from saying more about it and took him by the hand. It was late, still night, so when they left the dorms quietly, all they saw were the faint lit corridors.

It was enchanting, mesmerizing, yet the gloomy light from the moon that seeped through the windows gave that extremely isolated feeling. The corridors were empty and long, utterly quiet except for two pairs of feet tapping against the stone at such a speed one would wonder what's the rush. Remus grabbed his hand firmly and together they ran through the hallways, Severus barely keeping up and stumbling because he wasn't fully awake, and Remus filled with energy and anticipation. Without holding Remus' hand, he knew he would fall and was lucky enough he didn't.

They were out of breath when they arrived in front of the closed doors of the Great Hall. When Remus extended a hand to push them open, Severus stopped him.

“What are you doing,” He whispered as if someone was close enough to hear at 3 a.m. Remus smirked and gave the final push while Severus watched in amazement that they were even open. His eyes went wide and his lips parted when the Great Hall was revealed. The candles in the air created stars and a magic atmosphere. The usual tables weren't in sight and instead, there was a massive Christmas tree at the end which was decorated. The floor wasn't stone anymore but was covered in a thick layer of freezing ice. The moonlight came in from the windows behind the tree and cast the light in the room with help from the candles. Even the ice seemed to glitter. A couple of house-elves were spreading around some sort of dust and he rapidly figured out it was glitter. He had never seen ice within Hogwarts.

“What is this?” Severus asked after his eyes scanned his surroundings. Remus waved at the house elves who disappeared all of the sudden with multiple pops.

“I asked the house-elves to arrange something for us. Do you like it?” He was too stunned to react but he was able to nod his head. He was pulled out of his thoughts when the doors behind them closed and Dobby appeared in front of them with both of his hands in the air to hold up ice skates.

“Master Moony, as requested.” He handed over the skates and popped away before Remus could thank him.

“Master Moony?” He shrugged with a small laugh.

“He overheard Sirius calling me that and now he won’t stop using it.” They put on their skates but Severus struggled with tying them in place. He had been skating before, with his mother when he was younger, but never did he have to put them on himself. They appeared rather complicated and his foot didn’t even fit for some reason. They were the right size, said Remus, but he just couldn’t get them on. He made a frustrated sound and was so concentrated he didn’t notice Remus moving until he crouched down in front of him with a huff of laughter. Severus crossed his arms and glared at him.

“That’s not funny, Lupin.” Remus held in his laughter at the whiny voice and untied the mixture of laces Severus attempted to make.

“I really wish you’d call me Remus. You’re my boyfriend after all.” Severus was speechless at the blunt comment so he stayed quiet and observed Remus who was busy tying his skates neatly. Once the other one was done, Severus pulled the man up on his feet and they almost fell on the slippery ice.

“Come,” He said through that innocent and sweet laugh. The lights dimmed and all the house elves were gone, it was just the two of them. Remus intertwined his hand with Severus’ and they skated over the ice. Severus was undeniably good at it and he was actually rather surprised that he was even better than him. Never did he make a small mistake, he never stumbled or slipped or anything even close to that. He was absolutely flawless while Remus occasionally struggled with keeping his balance. He tried to cover up by skating close to Severus and holding his hand. He squeezed every time he felt like he’d fall and Severus would smirk the entire time.

“Is there a reason you keep holding my hand?” He said after their third lapse. Before that, they were in comfortable silence and neither felt the need to fill it up with useless words. It was enchanting, really. Remus ducked his head.

“I just like holding your hand.” He wasn’t lying, he did, but he also wasn’t keen on embarrassing himself by falling the moment he’d let go. Severus nodded unconvinced.

“Hmm, yeah sure. You skate extremely elegantly.” It held so much sarcasm that it made Remus laugh.

“Are you challenging me?” He drew with amusement in his tone. Severus’ smirk grew wider and he turned his head to look at Remus. Remus was distracted by the eyes he was looking in and just when he thought things were going well, he tripped over his own feet and fell. He cursed under his breath when Severus looked down at him.

“I’m in. What do I get when I win, though?” He helped Remus stand again.

“How about this? When I win, I get a kissie from you. When you win, I’ll let you sketch my

beautiful face for free.” Severus’ eyebrows rose.

“So confident in yourself.” Before Remus could respond, he yelled the number of lapses and began to skate away. His mouth hung open and he quickly followed although he couldn’t keep up with him.

“that’s fucking unfair!” Severus’ laughter filled the silence in the hall. Everything felt like a dream. He felt afraid of waking up. He wanted what they had to last and was afraid of what the future will bring.

## Chapter twenty six

Christmas had gone by too soon for all of them. It felt like a few hours of the Christmas break before the day that the students were returning to school arrived. Merely a day, they'd come tomorrow morning.

He wasn't overly worried at seeing his friends although he had to admit the fight with Sirius had still not been talked out. In fact, he hadn't even spoken to him since that last day. He had sent owls back and forth with letters for James and Peter but none of them was for his best friend.

It was strange to be so disconnected from him after being literally inseparable. When Remus' name came up in conversations, people automatically thought about Sirius first and then the Marauders in general. They were the iconic duo, having the same interests and same taste in almost everything that it seemed impossible for them to not be friends. James and Peter were his friends as well, obviously, although even he admitted to having less in common with them. That didn't even matter the most to him, but he felt he could communicate with Sirius without any words. They saved each other in a way.

James kept Remus up with all the news that went around in the muggle world. Sirius was occasionally mentioned and thrown in as if they didn't have a fight and Remus would ignore it in his next letter, not saying a thing about James' adventures with him. The last letter was more concerning. It merely said he had to make it up with Sirius because otherwise the friendship would fall apart and Remus realized that even more after reading it. He had no idea what to do now. What should he tell him?

That pondered through his mind the entire night and before he could blink, the day arrived and he felt exhausted. His bones cracked when he moved and sparks of pain shot through his back and legs that were a mere reminder of the full moon that wasn't far away. His symptoms were expressed in pain and became more severe right before the full moon and several days after. He took potions from Pomfrey who aided him and helped him get back on track. Nevertheless, he needed to figure out what to do. So he stayed in bed to weigh the pros and cons of telling them the truth and why he got mad. He was just on edge, perhaps that was a good reason.

Fuck....and then there was that thing that Remus totally forgot. The night of the Yule Ball where he literally slurred Severus through the room with everyone watching, wondering what was going on. He could feel eyes burning in his back, saw Sirius and James with their mouths hanging open in shock and distaste. No, he knew what he was going to say, it was going to be fine. He'd tell them he needed to get close to Severus for his mission for the Headmaster and that it was his task to find out whether or not he had the Dark Mark. They'd believe that and they probably wouldn't tell anyone because secrets stayed inside, they promised that to each other years ago. Remus had no real reason why he was obliged to tell them about their "relationship."

With his mind sorted through and placed in a neat row, he finally got out of bed. He got dressed rather quickly and cast a Tempus to see what the time was. He still had another three hours before the rest of the students would arrive.

When he walked into the common room, he was startled by the figure sitting on the couch with a book in his lap. His back was hunched over it and Remus immediately recognized it as Severus' position while he was drawing so he made his presence known by a cough and slowly went over to him to sit next to him.

Severus hadn't looked up once and kept drawing although Remus couldn't see what he was creating

since his hair hung over it. He refrained himself from interrupting and merely stared at the pencil scribbling and sketching over the paper.

“What are you drawing?” He said eventually since Severus didn't seem to notice he was even there. Severus yelped and dropped the pencil out of shock, glaring at Remus.

“None of your business, wolf.” He picked up the pencil and Remus took the chance to peek at the sketch that was half-open in his Severus' hand and bit the inside of his lip to keep himself from....doing what? Not laughing? No, it was a masterpiece but still, he hadn't expected Severus to draw these kinds of things.

“I said don't look!” Severus said with a raised voice as soon as he had the pencil and sat up straight again, shielding the paper from his boyfriend.

“Sev, I already saw it. Seriously? I mean- it's good but I wasn't expecting it,” He said in an amusing tone although his body didn't feel like joking. In fact, the area around his crotch got rather and he wanted to adjust it but couldn't do that in front of him. The drawing contained a sketch of two people, obviously Severus and Remus, he could recognize that even without colour. He felt arousal bubble up from the vulgar picture. Remus was on his back with a smug expression on his face, hands under his head and looking up at Severus. His scars that Severus knew of were captured with great care and made it appear more realistic than ever. He had slightly toned abs, just like real him had, muscled calves and a bit of chest hair with a trail leading down.

Severus was the one who made the better picture. At least, that was his opinion but he was sure Severus would disagree with that statement. He was straddling him with his thighs spread on either side and Remus' cock half disappearing in a tight rim of muscle and he groaned softly aloud, hoping the Slytherin didn't notice. Severus was practically riding him and not merely that but his hands were behind his back, tied with rope. His erect, leaking cock was trapped in a cock ring to keep him from coming and a spot of precum stuck on Remus' stomach. Severus drew himself rather thin just like he was in real life. He had little to no hair except for some light dusted hairs on his legs that were quite muscular as well.

“You should make it a moving drawing,” He managed to force out even in his aroused state that indicated he should jump Severus right here, with just two hours before students would come in. Severus said nothing except for a foolish scoff, dismissing the idea and immediately standing up with his sketchbook. Remus followed with a smirk and just before they reached the painting, he grabbed Severus' wrist and spun him around. He pulled him close to his chest, bodies aligned with each other and pressing his hardness against Severus' thigh. He was pleased to notice Severus' erection pressing against him but he also knew that now wasn't the best time.

“We aren't leaving before I get my morning kissie,” He cooed stupidly. Severus rolled his eyes, muttering to himself about how clingy he was and not being able to finish the sentence before Remus pushed his lips against his. The kiss was more heated than usual; sloppy, messy and absolutely passionate. Neither of them broke off and started panting in the kiss itself and Remus shuffled forward until Severus' back collided against the wall. He let out a grunt from the pain mixed with pleasure. He spread Severus' legs a bit and wedged a leg between them, slowly lifting it up until it met his cock.

Severus moaned openly, hands now waving through the boy's hair with care and tugging every now and then.

“Fuck, you're so hot-” He growled and every part in his body screamed: Mine. Severus was his” and no one could steal it from him. He was feeling the possessive side of his werewolf come out and needed to do this with Severus. He needed to make him come from his leg alone. He broke off

the kiss and before Severus had the chance to frown at the sudden change of events, he lowered his head to lick his neck. He knew he should probably kiss and bite like normal people would do, like Sirius instructed him to do when they were younger, but he wanted to lick him. He needed to taste his bare skin.

“What- Remus, I'm not ready to have sex.” He still continued grunting as if he was a wanton whore but Remus knew they couldn't do that, especially if he wasn't ready yet.

“I promise. We'll wait. Please let me get you off.” He was hesitant but gave him a curt nod. Remus yelled victory in his mind and began to attack him with kisses once more. Severus was actively interacting with him and followed the movements and soon enough he was affectionately bucking and twisting his hips to rub his hard cock over Remus' clad thigh. Never had either of them expected it to be this good.

Remus had jerked off before, had let a girl suck him occasionally to relieve some stress or because Sirius pressured him into getting laid. He had never got laid though, he lied to Sirius that he fucked the girls but merely had them suck him off and never got any further. This was different, he was never this excited with a girl even when he'd be swallowed down the root into a hot mouth. Rubbing his straining erection against Severus' muscled thigh was turning him on more than everything he'd ever done in life. He couldn't keep up with the pace and it became irregular when both of them got closer.

“Sev, Sev. Say you're mine. Say it,” He begged, aware of how desperate and needy he sounded. Severus threw his head back against the wall and snapped his hips forward with Remus breathing harshly against his neck.

“I'm yours. Yours, forever.” Just like that, Remus' whole body began to shudder. He jerked forward once more and his climax overcame him. He could feel it shooting out of his slit, dripping into his underpants. It was rather uncomfortable when he felt it was beginning to cool off already and it soaked through the fabric, creating a spot at the front of his trousers. Severus looked down and his eyes went wide when he saw the spot and he came as well, shooting his own load in his pants as if he was a randy, hormonal teenager. Perhaps he was, but he was never this desperate, desperate enough to soil his pants with his own cum.

Severus cleaned up with a spell for both of them while Remus continued to worry about the time. They didn't have much time left so Severus eventually went to walk back to his Slytherin dorm alone while Remus sat down on the couch to wait for his friends.

It wasn't long before Peter arrived and they caught up a bit. Then Sirius and James came storming in, laughing and joking around but the moment Sirius laid his eyes upon Remus, his expression was the fire.

“Why did you talk to that greasy snake?” And they all went silent because they all knew what he was talking about. The night of the Yule Ball, when Remus dragged him across the room and the halls as if they were friends.

## Chapter twenty seven

“I can explain,” He said as soon as they moved their conversation to the private dorms since other Gryffindors started to come in. James sighed, letting himself fall on the mattress. He already knew what was coming and he knew that Sirius would freak out.

“Ye? Do it then, Moony. Spill the fucking tea,” He sneered while Peter snickered at the use of Sirius’ words. He’d been hanging around with too many girls in the Christmas break, that much was obvious.

“I-” and then Remus froze. He had practised every sentence in his head, multiple times, and yet he couldn’t find any support to grab himself onto. He couldn’t get it out of his mouth, past his lips. Perhaps it had to do due to the fact that he hated thinking everything he did was because of that stupid mission. It felt like lying although it wasn’t necessarily lying. Just half-truths, if that even counted. He inhaled deeply through his nose and paced back and forth twice, then halted abruptly, staring up at Sirius and ignoring his other friends. He could feel sweat dripping from his forehead and his palms were sticky so he dragged them over the fabric of his trousers, having a flashback to moments before his friends came when he pushed Severus against the wall and made him come inside his pants.

“Dumbledore ordered me to....” Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. He was lying. Stop it, tell the truth. He couldn’t. Remus couldn’t tell them. “He ordered me to find out whether or not Sev has the Dark Mark.” Sirius cleared his throat and gestured at him when he said Severus’ name in that tone.

“Snape. I mean Snape.” Then everyone stayed quiet as if they expected more elaboration so Remus decided to grant them with it.

“And that’s why I have to get close to him, okay? He hides his arm a lot. He needs to trust me.” James and Peter exchanged an expression Remus could not unravel as Sirius merely stared at him.

“This is sick,” James muttered more to himself than to the group. The tension was rising with each second of silence and Remus took that time to reflect upon himself and his actions, instead of focusing on the shocked looks. Was it sick that he used Severus in ways only to learn his secrets? He had become so close to the man in so little time. Severus shared his hobbies, such as drawing, and Remus came to know what he disliked and loved even if he didn’t show it. He learned how insecure he was, how he talked down on himself without noticing and how he wouldn’t let himself enjoy the little moments. Remus started his actions to find out his secrets but it grew out to the point where he did the things he did to merely see him smile or giggle. He’d do his utter best to joke around and Severus would do that little cough to cover up the giggle, or he’d blush whenever he was given a compliment and he’d dismiss it a moment later. So, was James right? In the end, he shrugged at the comment and waited for something, anything, to happen.

“Right er- thanks for telling us, but I expected more from you. I....” James scratched the back of his head and shook his head, interrupting his own sentence and never finishing it. Peter stayed quiet for most of the part except a word or two and Sirius was absolutely speechless. It seemed to get in their system a bit better because soon enough the conversation was moving again. They briefly talked about Severus and Remus and then it went about their Christmas breaks. Remus was glad it was over and when they went to the Great Hall for dinner, James said he wanted to speak to him alone. They found a corridor that wasn’t used often and Remus leaned against the cold wall, swallowing down the lump of anxiety that merely grew after each swallow.

“You aren’t doing it for Dumbledore, are you? I see the way you look at him, Moony. This can’t be

just- You need to be careful, okay? Who knows what Sirius or Peter are planning and soon enough Severus' heart will break if he finds out. Just watch out," He whispered after glancing around to see if their surroundings were safe. Remus stood there perplexed and had no idea what to say. He had replayed those thoughts in his mind but it had never been addressed and he didn't know how to feel about it. Did he perhaps....even love him? He couldn't but nodded at James who returned it with a brief and hesitant smile.

Meanwhile, Severus was already seated at the Slytherin table for lunch even with his lack of desire for food at the moment. He was aware of his little smile plastered on his face but he couldn't help it. He had never done that before, it felt so surreal. He loved it, though. The panting in his neck, the kissing and the rubbing a body against another hot body. The friction on his cock and how he came in his pants.

The day went past in peace. Severus went to the black lake immediately after eating a few bites and began to draw and Remus managed to come up with an excuse to follow him moments after.

"Hello, darling," Remus said cheerily. His nerves were on edge that morning because of the news but it all disappeared after coming clean and he finally let himself relax. He sat down on the same rock Severus sat on with a soft grunt which was surprisingly warm and not covered with snow. He made a mental note to ask about the spell that could make a spot clean later. Severus hummed in the knowledge that he was there but continued drawing and only looked up a second when Remus pressed a loving kiss against his cold cheek.

They sat like that for a while, Remus talking about everything and nothing at all while Severus listened and drew with his fingerless gloves on. The layer of snow outside lessened in a couple of weeks and he was grateful that he was able to get outside without freezing to death.

It was about an hour in their conversation when a group of Gryffindors managed to get close enough to see both of them. They were laughing and talking loudly and suddenly one of them pointed in their direction and Severus' head snapped up in fear. He abruptly closed the little sketchbook and hid it between them, half under his thigh so that merely half of it stood out. Remus was surprised by the change of expression and emotions in Severus although it wasn't all too obvious, it was obvious to him. They stayed quiet, Remus hadn't dared to interrupt it. He supposed it was important for Severus to draw as little attention to himself as possible and he was not there to ruin his wishes. He also knew that the group of Gryffindors, in the same year as them, had already seen them sitting on the rock.

"There's nothing to be scared of-" He wanted to assure Severus but got broken off before he could finish as the voices grew louder, enough for them to hear.

"-ooh, look. The rumours are true," one of them said, pointing towards them while the others were laughing and snickering.

"Merlin. I owe Dave a twenty, I thought he was bluffing," the other mentioned, elbowing his friend. They continued talking about them as they walked away, the voices turning into distant murmurs. All they could hear was them mocking Severus and that Remus had really done it this time. Severus said nothing when they were finally alone, however he stood up. He wiped the snow off his trousers and quickly snatched the sketchbook, scowling at Remus when he walked away without turning back.

"Bye, Lupin," He sneered, thinking Remus couldn't hear him.

Remus sat perplexed. Severus didn't even know what they were talking about but he knew that he couldn't handle the mockery and that's why he left. Although, his curiosity grew when he had the

time to think about what happened. What were they talking about? It couldn't be.....that, right?

## Chapter twenty eight

He was still rather confused about what exactly happened. He had walked away from Remus after those Gryffindors made comments about them but it made him wonder what they were talking about. He hadn't had long to ponder alone. He had found a private place somewhere else where he could draw in peace as he thought about it but soon it was time for dinner.

He was dreading dinner but he came anyway. The Slytherin's were nice enough. It's not as if he was beaten every day as the Marauders did to him before Remus had put a sort of stop to it. It was awfully quiet when he walked through the corridors to dinner. Not because there weren't many students but because they seemed to stare at him. He was used to it by now but this was more severe than he remembered. Perhaps the Christmas break really took a toll on him and he forgot what it felt like to be watched by everyone, to be the centre of mockery.

He ignored it, keeping his head low and eyes cast toward the stone floor as he went to the Great Hall. He was aware of every movement he made, every step. He felt the bag against his hip with each step, the way his knees would occasionally nearly give up as if they were too exhausted to walk properly while in reality, he knew it was due to the fact that he couldn't seem to function properly under the eyes of others. He always had trouble with that, always managed to stumble over his own feet just when others looked at him.

He made his awkward walk to the Slytherin table and laughter and talking stopped when he came in. It didn't stop completely but Severus now really knew something was going on, something he had missed in the time he was gone. He cleared his throat and seated himself at the table, the left place empty and the right occupied by Avery. He wasn't that bad, but everyone knew he was soon going to join the Dark Lord's side with Lucius and a few others. They talked openly about it in the Slytherin common room so it wasn't hard to figure out who was on who's side. Severus merely pretended he agreed with their thoughts because trouble would arise if he didn't. They'd be tormented. He remembered his own time when he just arrived, first year, without any clue who the Dark Lord was. He found out in a not so pleasant way.

It was when a group of older students were talking about it in the common room, Lucius and Avery included. They hadn't mentioned Voldemort but had a discussion about Purebloods, values and Mudbloods. He knew what that word meant and had the audacity to point out that it shouldn't be used and that it was an insult. He was still friends with Lily, who was called that once by someone from Slytherin.

Lucius had turned around with a smirk on his face and invited Severus into their circle. They were nice to him and Severus didn't understand what they were doing. They got drunk and the night was blurry but he remembered the lesson he learned. He remembered throwing up from the alcohol, how they forced him to lick it from the ground, how they punched him and sent him to bed with blood on his clothes and vomit sticking to his chin and face. He had to visit Pomfrey the next morning because of the illness he managed to catch from eating his own vomit and the mild infection he got from one of the wounds on his body. Pomfrey had looked at him with concern in her eyes while she fixed him up and it went so far that she even gave him the password to her private quarters if she was ever needed. He never went, though, and she never mentioned it again. So he had learned how to keep low and watched when other first years were tormented instead.

Now, he forced himself to eat the dinner in front of him as he kept his ears open for any clues on what happened. He frequently heard his name come by, even Remus' once or twice. Eventually, he couldn't bear not knowing and tapped Avery on his shoulder who turned around to face him with a

frown. They normally didn't talk but they were on the same page.

"What's going on?" He asked, confused. Avery snorted, elbowing the unknown guy next to him.

"You hear that? He doesn't know what's going on." Severus rolled his eyes, annoyed that they couldn't even answer a simple question. The other boy laughed and Avery turned back to him.

"Sorry, Sevy, but your secret is out. It seems that Lupin was asked by the Headmaster to spy on you to see if you have the Dark Mark. There goes your lover," He cooed. A few others started listening to the conversation as well and they snickered at the confused expression Severus had. What were they talking about? The Dark Mark? Why- was Lupin asked to get close to him by Dumbledore? His breathing came out erratic and all kinds of theories roamed through his head. His vision began to blur and tears were prickling in his eyes. Remus was asked to do this. Remus doesn't like him. Remus only did everything he did for Dumbledore. He hates him. He made a mockery out of him once again, just when Severus started to trust him.

He abruptly stood up and pulled the left sleeve of his robe down, aware of what everyone around him was thinking. They thought he was the Dark Lord's servant. Remus hates him, they all hate him. He scanned his surroundings, all eyes on him and meanwhile the staff did nothing to stop it. It was Dumbledore's idea after all, what did he expect? He raised his eyes to the table and noticed they were staring at him as well. Dumbledore with sparkly eyes, McGonogal with concern flashing in front of her and Pomfrey nearly breaking out in crying.

Severus felt as if he couldn't think clearly anymore, couldn't walk straight. He grabbed his bag and marched to the exit without looking up.

"Snivelly," Several from the Gryffindor table yelled. that's when he broke off in a run, ignoring the comments being shouted in the Great Hall, ignoring Dumbledore's powerful voice saying that they needed to settle down.

Tears were streaming down his face by the time he was out of his breath, still running through the corridors. He went to the common room, yelled the password in agony, making some of the paintings look up in awe and annoyance at being disturbed. He ran to his dorm room and rummaged through his suitcase until he found what he was looking for. He held the sharp blade up in the light and wept tears of happiness. All he felt was peace and anticipation when he stared at the blade. This was going to be his last time to cut himself. He sagged down onto the floor and set the blade down on his wrist that was littered with old and new cuts, scars and cigarette burns. He took a shaky breath and sliced it through his skin, wincing with pain. He deserved it after all. But he wasn't going to end it this way. He was going to end it in the way he always thought he would. He was going to end it like that night when Remus saved him, the Astronomy Tower.

## Chapter twenty nine

He sat perplexed, could barely believe his eyes. Severus had just run out of the Great Hall while Gryffindors made fun of his name. He exchanged a look with James who shrugged and didn't say anything, then his eyes flickered toward Peter and Sirius. Peter with furrowed eyebrows and Sirius with a well-knowing smirk plastered on his face. Rage boiled up in Remus. Sirius. Sirius told others. He told the one thing he was meant to keep a secret. He ruined everything. He loved Severus and now that was ruined as well. His nostrils flared and he banged his fist on the table to get Sirius' attention.

"What's wrong, Moony? I did what I had to do. I didn't actually think you didn't want me to tell anyone." And then that obnoxious asshole had the audacity to roll his eyes at him. Remus stood up from his place.

"How fucking dare you," He spat angrily, voice an octave higher than normal, " You- you selfish bastard. He was mine. You ruined it," he screamed.

"Remus, stop it," James whispered behind him, but he wasn't listening. He raised his fist in the air and before Sirius could defend himself, it landed against his cheek. It was with such force that he wondered where that strength was during other times. People around him gasped with surprise and Sirius shot daggers at him with his eyes, holding his cheek in his hand. A dribble of blood rolled down from his cheekbone where he managed to make some sort of cut.

"This is enough!" The Headmaster said. No one was having anything of it and now Sirius chuckled darkly.

"Remus, you're pathetic. You're fucking that greasy snake, aren't you?! You are so goddamn desperate for attention, you-" James interrupted.

"Both of you stop it! Remus, go after him." Remus didn't hesitate and was vaguely aware of a few punches being thrown by James and Sirius, then the shrieking of students when Dumbledore stunned them both and yelled at everyone to go to their room. Remus didn't know where he was going but he had a small thought that popped into his mind.

He ran through the corridors, his mind fixated upon the fact that several minutes earlier, Severus was running through these. Everything revolved around him. He couldn't think of anything else. He felt guilt, remorse and empathy. How could he be this bloody stupid? How could he think this was going to end well, especially after telling the Marauders? Gosh, Sirius was such a fucking asshole. He told everyone, causing Severus to probably relapse. He was going to relapse, he was going to kill himself. He knew it, felt it in his guts. He needed to find out where he was before it was too late. He fucked up so bad. All Remus wanted was to beg for forgiveness, to kiss Severus mercilessly and whisper how amazing and beautiful he was. He did those things before but he was sure Severus didn't believe them. Severus was all alone somewhere, thinking everything Remus said to him was an act. He didn't even want to know how hopeless the boy felt.

He was halfway on his way to the Slytherin; until he stopped in his tracks. Of course, how stupid, Severus wouldn't be there. He went to the Astronomy Tower just like their first night when he found out he was going to kill himself when he had wrapped his arms around the Slytherin for the first time to avoid him jumping off the tower. He turned on his heels and began to run in the opposite direction. He was in good shape and felt grateful for it. He knew that Severus hadn't because of the malnourishment from when he was younger and that he was still so weak, not taking proper care of himself, and merely hoped it might give Remus more time to climb those awful

stairs.

The steps echoed through the tower when he raced up. He tripped over his feet multiple times, falling down on the steps and ignoring the swelling and the blood dripping from his knees and elbows from catching the falls. He didn't have much time left. He couldn't believe people were so cruel to have driven this young boy into this and when Remus thought about it, he was a part of that group. He was one of the four that caused the massive misery that Severus found him in. He had made sure he couldn't be happy at Hogwarts. He was the one who should suffer, not Severus. Hope began to rise once again when he saw the top. He ran even faster, sprinting and skipping over the steps. He didn't even know if Severus was here. Before he could even look around to see if he was, he began to yell.

"Severus! Don't do it," He screamed at the top of his lungs. The bright daylight now going over in a shimmer caused the entire situation to look like a dream. It felt as if he wasn't in his own body, as if he was watching a movie about his own life. He didn't even feel the pain in his back or aching in his legs anymore. He didn't feel the burn in his throat from being out of breath or the brightness of the red sun going into a sunset.

When he didn't get an answer, he feared it was too late and scanned the area. He felt like a fool that he suddenly screamed as if Severus wasn't even there. But he was, he was standing at the edge like last time. He had yet to climb over the railing but Remus knew it was easy to get over it, in less than a second he'd be able to jump.

He couldn't even register what was happening. Severus was right there, dried tears streaking over his cheeks and red, puffy eyes so that his pupils were nearly hidden by the skin. His clothing was rumpled and it seemed that he had shed his outer robe off.

"Sev, please. Just listen to me." Severus stayed quiet but didn't move from his place. In fact, he didn't even look Remus in the eyes but they were cast at the wall behind him as if he was ignoring his entire existence. Just when Remus thought he wasn't going to talk, he began to talk.

"No, Remus. I'm done. You've had your fun once again. You ruined me once again. Do you really want to know whether I have the Dark Mark, Lupin? Do you want to know the truth before I jump to my fucking death? that's why you did everything you did, right?" He spat, anger busting over the surface. Remus shook his head, desperate for Severus to stop talking about the sins he committed. He didn't want to know whether or not he had the Dark Mark anymore, he didn't care. He wanted to get the boy safe, to wrap him in his arms and kiss his forehead.

that's when something in Severus broke. Remus couldn't claim that he didn't want to know, after all, he'd gone this far just to figure out the truth, right?

It was almost frightening, Remus thought. The way Severus began to laugh. He began to laugh in a situation where it revolved around life and death, betrayal and trust that had been broken. It wasn't even the normal laugh Remus was used to hearing, the small giggle or the laughing attack when Remus tickled him. It was hysterical and dark. As if Severus simply did not care about anything anymore, like he lost hope.

"You want to know, Lupin? You want to fucking know!?" He bellowed, voice cracking mid-sentence. Remus stayed silent even with the urge to run to Severus and merely watched the boy roll up his left sleeve. Remus held his breath. Even if he didn't care about that anymore, he still wanted to know. He'd started this mission originally because of this and now he was going to see it.

What he expected was everything but that. He felt his heart skip a beat and a yelp of terror escaped his throat. He thought back to his time together with Severus and it all added up to what he was

showing now. How could he be this oblivious? All this time, when Remus was busy betraying Severus, Severus was suffering through the pain he had caused to himself. He was secretly torturing himself and Remus did nothing to stop it. This was what he'd been hiding all those years. Severus was bullied and tortured while dealing with this, dealing with this self-destructive behaviour.

He couldn't keep his eyes off the exposed, trembling arm. Gushes of blood were bubbling up and dripping to his hand, then falling from the fingertips on the floor. It was so incredibly big that it occupied the whole lower arm. It was so deep that Remus could see the bone sticking out. Severus rolled his sleeve up even more and revealed the nasty truth of his upper arm which was littered with old and new scars, self-inflicted scars. Remus forced himself to swallow down the lump of pain.

"I- You...." Severus let out a bark of a laugh.

"Oh, so now you suddenly care. Fuck off, Lupin." Remus knew he was running out of time as Severus was slowly bleeding to death or jumping to death.

"Severus," He said carefully, taking one step forward. Severus' eyes went wide when he realized Remus was coming closer and took a step backwards, his back pushed against the railing.

"No! Stay away from me or I'll kill myself," He cried hysterically. Remus flinched at the harsh tone.

"Please," He whispered. The tears were now back in his eyes. He felt dizzy and his lungs seemed to lack the oxygen he needed as he was getting light-headed. He needed to focus, he couldn't lose the one important person in his life. He forced himself to take another step, practically shuffling forward in hope that Severus didn't notice. He did notice, though.

"I hate you," Severus sobbed. Remus was aware of the tear rolling down his cheek, his stuffy nose and the aching in his knees coming back. The wetness of his elbows caused the fabric of his robes to stick to his arm and he hated it. He hated every moment of this situation. He hated that Severus was in arm reach but that he couldn't do anything, that Severus was bleeding, that Severus had done this to himself and that Severus was going to commit suicide because of him. He could never live with the ugly truth of being the source of so much pain for him.

"I love you," He whispered through the pain.

"No, you don't. You don't." Remus evidently heard the self-doubt in Severus' voice when he said it. It was obvious he was trying to convince himself of something he didn't believe, or something he didn't want to believe.

"I do. Please, I can't live without you. I promise you that I'm never going to do something like this again. Darling, I-" His voice broke but he continued, "I love you so much. Dumbledore indeed asked me to find out whether you have the Dark Mark but I never expected it to end like this. Severus, I started to develop feelings for you, okay? I was so fucking scared of hurting you but I wanted to be with you so bad. And now- I didn't dare to think I love you but I do. I love you." Now that he said it, he couldn't stop saying it. He wanted to shower Severus in praise and compliments. He wanted to show his gratefulness and how much he loved and cared for him.

Something broke in Severus because suddenly his back wasn't so straight anymore, his eyes weren't so alert and he wasn't desperately pushing himself against the railing. He relaxed his entire body and slumped down on his knees with a grunt. At first, Remus was confused and didn't know what was going on until he realized it. He was dying. He sprinted over to him and fell down on his

knees, crouched in front of Severus who had his right hand covering his left arm.

“Severus? Severus, are you awake?” Severus gave a vague nod but his eyelids started to flutter shut. His head began to loll backwards and he sagged down even more. Remus couldn't believe this was happening. He couldn't lose him.

“No, no, don't you dare close your eyes. Darling, stay with me. I- please. C'mon, don't give up. Sev, I love you. I love you so much.” He was so frightened that these were the last words he was going to say to Severus. He needed to make them worthy. He needed Severus to die in peace, with him knowing how much Remus loved him.

## Chapter thirty

He had lost all hope. It was too late for him to leave, to run all those stairs to find help. He also didn't want to leave Severus alone in his last moments. He was simply trapped without any real option. He tried to feel Severus' heartbeat in his neck and was relieved to find a faint beating, but it wouldn't last very long. Severus had his eyes fully closed, head supported by the railing behind him and his arms limp to his side. He occasionally gave a grunt or two in the affirmation that he was alive.

Remus needed to stop the bleeding so he shed his outer robe and ripped off a piece of fabric. He lifted Severus' arm, cautious to not touch the extreme wound.

"It's going to be okay. Just- hold on, Sev." He didn't know whether he was busy trying to convince himself or Severus. He had immense experience with how to bind a wound the best way after he had treated himself several times after the full moon. Before others knew, he was forced to take care of himself, going through the painful transformation and gasping at the damage he managed to have done to himself. He merely hoped that this would be reliable enough since his cuts or wounds hadn't looked quite like Severus'.

His heart was thumping and he could only hear the blood rushing to his ears. Although it was slowly getting colder and also inching towards the full blackness of the night, he was sweating and panting from the warmth. Severus' face was pale, his body gave occasional tremors which were one of the last signs of life in him.

"I love you, love you. Fuck, I-" He shook his head. Fretting wasn't going to work, he needed to think fast and take action before it was too late. He gave a last pull at the fabric now wrapped around the wrist, blood seeping through it and wetting it. Severus' arm jerked at the pull but he stayed still.

He was barely able to pick up his wands, as his fingers were completely numb and his hand shaking wildly. He was going to lose Severus. Severus was going to die. He closed his eyes in full concentration. He had to do this, for Severus' sake. It had never worked before as it was a quite tricky spell but it was the only thing that could help. He didn't even need to speak a message before others would know something was up. He just needed to send the Patronus.

His eyes were closed and his anxiety was kept on edge while remembering who was laying next to him, nearly unconscious forever. A person couldn't rush these things, especially if they had never done it before. He took himself back in his memory. He searched and searched before finding a scenario. It was vague but clear enough for him to know exactly what his mind had pushed him into. It was one of his nights "s with Severus on the Astronomy Tower when they still met up there.

Remus had surprised him with a stack of warm blankets and a few pillows. Severus had walked in and immediately his face turned into a scowl. He had crossed his arms stubbornly and shook his head.

"I'm not snuggling up against you to keep you warm, Lupin," He sneered with clear amusement in his voice. Remus laughed and set up the warm space before sitting himself down and patting the empty spot next to him.

"Come, before you freeze to death. I don't wanna get in trouble," He teased. Severus seemed hesitant, shifting on his feet and glancing over his shoulder as if he still expected the Marauder's to

jump out. He shrugged his shoulders and carefully sat down next to Remus who was already busy pulling the blankets over them. Severus was tense at first, purposely not letting himself relax but they fell into a comfortable situation. They spilt some jokes and shared funny thoughts for hours, meaningless conversations that meant the world to Remus. He hadn't even thought about it but suddenly he found his arm going around Severus' shoulder and pulling him closer. The Slytherin protested lightly but didn't give much of a fight since he was too comfortable to really care. He let himself be defeated by Remus and let his head fall on the warm shoulder as Remus wrapped his other arm around his waist to press them even closer.

"You're annoying," Severus had whispered and Remus answered with a snort and nuzzling Severus' hair.

"I know."

That was the first time they actually grew a stronger bond. It was imprinted in his mind. He cherished the memory before remembering where he was and what he had to do.

"Expecto Patronum." He hadn't dared to open his eyes but when he felt a surge of magic wash over him, he became hopeful. He started to think about all the possibilities, the future they might have together. He opened his eyes and stared with his mouth half-open at the animal in front of him. It worked and it was absolutely stunning. It wasn't as he expected, a stag appeared in front of him. It's blue light shining bright at the top of the Astronomy Tower. He didn't know what to do, how to send the Patronus away for help but it almost seemed like it knew what to do because it hopped to the stairs. He watched the light disappear and dropped the wand on the ground out of shock. He could merely hope, that was all that he could do.

He crawled to Severus who hadn't moved. His chest was rising and falling in a steady rhythm but there were stutters in between them. Remus was extremely frightened and the tears that had dried up, leaving tracks down his cheeks, sprang up again. He sat down next to him and with trembling hands, he wrapped his arms around his waist as he had done in that memory. Instead of the warmth of the body, he felt back then, Severus was now freezing. Instead of the giggle or the huff he'd let out, he stayed quiet. His head didn't softly land on Remus' shoulder, but it slumped on him with a hollow sound.

Remus wept and for the first time, he didn't feel guilty for how much he was crying. He wanted Severus in his arms forever, he wanted to die with him.

"Why did it have to end this way. I- I love you, darling. Please don't let go." There was a small feeling in his stomach that was expecting Severus to answer with his addictive voice, but there was nothing but silence. Remus buried his face in the tangled, black hair and closed his eyes. He felt himself drift off from exhaustion although he tried to fight the urge to sleep. Nothing felt real again and he wanted to wake up from this nightmare. Or he wanted to sleep forever with Severus in his arms. Just when he was close to giving up and letting the darkness of sleep take him, footsteps echoed on the stone.

## Chapter thirty one

His head was throbbing. It felt as if he was in a coma because he couldn't see and also couldn't move. His muscles hurt and he actually managed to choke out a groan from the uncomfortable position on his back. His throat was too dry so he tried to swallow but it merely hurt even more.

When he heard a muffled voice, he suddenly snapped in reality and realized what happened. He gasped for air and a faint sound went off, a sort of alarm. Footsteps rushed to his side and cold glass was pushed against his lips until he obediently opened.

"Take it easy, Mr Lupin. No need to hurry," A soothing voice whispered, one he knew all too well from spending a morning each month here. The potion slipped down and he swallowed, trying to hide his distaste of the awful taste it left behind. He needed to ask Madam Pomfrey where he was and made an effort to open his eyes. It was exhausting to do so but he managed to squint them open, being greeted with the bright light of a lamp that caused him an immediate headache.

"Sev—" He croaked out, not being able to finish his sentence without sending himself in a coughing fit. His nose was stuffy and his throat was burning. He must've caught a cold from sitting up there so long. It wasn't important at the moment, he needed to see Severus.

"He's okay, dearest," She responded with fondness evident in her voice. Who would've thought this relationship would blossom into this. She was met with an unfamiliar Patronus merely a day before. She had learned to never ignore it, even when there wasn't a proper message, and followed it. The stag kept running faster and she knew something happened. It led her to the Astronomy Tower before it disappeared into thin air. She had trouble holding in her desperate, pained gasp at the sight. Two boys were both slumped against each other. Remus' arms loosely around Severus' fragile body. There were tears marking his cheeks, eyes puffed. When she averted her gaze to look at Severus, it was even worse. More tears, more puffy eyes and to her astonishment, blood splatters over his ripped clothes. She rushed over to them, falling to her knees and casting quick spells on the Slytherin to stop the bleeding from his wrist.

When she unwrapped the fabric that served as a bandage, she was horrified. How could she have never noticed the unhealthy habit of one of her students? She could've been too late. She treated the cut with care and gave him a mild dreamless sleep. His heartbeat was on the low side but he'd make it with special care, although he lost quite a lot of blood. Remus seemed to not have any physical injuries. He was merely exhausted, overworked and had a severe cold.

Now, Remus felt less tired and finally opened his eyes fully. Madam Pomfrey was hovering above him and immediately fed him another potion.

"Against the headache and the cold. You should feel better in half an hour," She announced professionally. He nodded and pushed himself on his elbows, ignoring the woman's protests that he needed to rest and lay down. He apparently fell asleep after finding out Severus was safe and he felt a bit better than before as well.

"Thank you," He said gratefully. Pomfrey offered him a warm smile. Remus was almost too afraid to ask her what he wanted to ask the moment he woke up.

"Do you want to see him? I am going to warn you that I'm not letting you stay out of bed the entire time." She truly wanted to grant him permission to stay with Severus but it was too risky. A quick visit could manage, though. Remus stayed patient as Pomfrey rolled up a wheelchair. He wanted to insist he had no need for it, that he could walk just fine and that it was nothing more than a mere

cold. But he couldn't deny that his bones felt like jelly and that his muscles were burning with every movement. These things increased when nearing the full moon or just after the full moon, so he had learned how to deal with it but the fact that he also caught a cold and some other things, he obediently accepted the help he received. He sat down with a painful squirm. Magic helped him wheel to the other part of the closed curtain and Pomfrey shut it behind him for privacy.

He saw the figure lying in bed out of the corner of his eyes and averted his eyes quickly to the curtain. For some reason, he didn't dare to look at how bad it was. Severus survived, obviously, but even from the blurry figure he saw for a second or two, he noticed the sickly pale skin. He muttered stupidly to himself to just look at Severus. Sighing, he slowly turned his head to look at Severus.

Severus; pale skin, dark shadows under his eyes, high cheekbones as always and chapped lips. Merlin, he lost even more weight. Remus rolled the wheelchair closer until it was located right next to Severus' head next to the bed. He was breathing softly, chest rising and falling in a steady rhythm. Remus adored the little snuff he let out with each exhale. The healthy blush on his cheeks was gone and when Remus shifted his gaze to look at the arms lying above the blanket, he noticed how bony they appeared to be.

With a shaking hand, he reached out, almost as if afraid Severus would suddenly wake up and seize his wrist. His thumb touched the cold skin of the place where the wrist connected with the palm, the only piece of skin that he was able to see. It felt lifeless, Severus looked lifeless. As a corpse, or someone in a coma. Perhaps he was, Remus hadn't asked Pomfrey about his conditions. The bandage was neatly wrapped around his forearm, the spot where Remus was foolish enough to believe the dark mark was. He felt horrible for his behaviour toward Severus.

"I'm sorry," He whispered, only now being aware of his entire body shaking and a tear leaking out of his eye. He fought the desperate urge to rip off the bandage, to caress his wounds with his love and care. He looked at the arm on the other side of Severus' torso, a bit further away from Remus. He strained his neck to see it better and swallowed thickly. More scars.

He didn't know how much time passed. It must've been about two hours before Pomfrey pulled back the curtain to inform him he needed to get back in bed. He protested weakly and to his surprise, she said nothing back and merely made sure that another hospital bed was set beside Severus'. He thanked her nonverbally as he was already dozing off in an uncomfortable position in the wheelchair. The bed wasn't entirely pushed against the other one with Severus on it, but a few inches in between.

He managed to crawl under the blankets without any help and squeezed his eyes shut, letting out a sob as that day kept replaying in his mind.

## Chapter thirty two

The pain was surging through his body. It felt as if it was on fire, he wanted to open his mouth and scream and thrash around until someone helped him. Did he die? Did his attempt finally work after so many years of trying? Had he cut deep enough? Had....Remus saw him die?

The blackness certainly didn't appear in any kind of afterlife, and it also didn't explain why he was conscious of himself. He started to analyze the entire situation until he heard voices.

“-Waking up,” Someone said rather loudly and excitedly. Severus didn't know why and frowned, immediately flinching at the pain.

“He moved! Did you see that?” The same voice again. He wanted to shout the person to shut their fucking mouth and let him sleep peacefully but kept quiet. He didn't know how much time passed since he first heard the voice and when he started to gain the ability to see. First the spots, then the bright light, then the shadows, furniture and two people having their eye on him. He sneered at them in fear covered up by anger and searched for his wand. He didn't recognize this place, perhaps those people were dangerous. He groaned loudly as he searched blindly for his wand that was nowhere to be seen. Strange, he usually hid it underneath his pillow.

“Sev?” Then it hit him. He was alive.

Remus had waited two weeks for Severus to wake up. Pomfrey thought it was better for him to regain all his strength and then wake up since she didn't know if Severus would make it if he'd be too stubborn to properly listen to her cautious instructions. He looked healthier, put on a bit of weight, the colour in his cheeks came back and the bandage was finally removed, leaving the trace of pink, raised scar starting just beneath the elbow cavity and going all the way down to his wrist.

When he finally awoke, he was seated next to him on the chair, fully recovered with a copy of The Picture of Dorian Gray that he was reading aloud to Severus. He wanted to give it to Severus once he awoke since he was sure he'd like it. Pomfrey just came in to change the feeding tube when Severus suddenly moved, a twitch of his fingers it began with and then the frowning when Remus notified Pomfrey of the movement. The boy opened his eyes and searched for something invisible, his wand.

It took a time to clear things up but Severus understood rather quickly although he was still under the influence of a potion-making him a bit dozy.

“Remus?” He whispered as soon as Pomfrey left after checking his health. Remus smiled at him, perching up to the tip of the chair.

“Yes, hi. You're alive,” He giggled nervously, “Obviously. How are you? Do you need anything? I can get you some-” He was stopped in his sentence where he wanted to ask Severus if he wanted some pudding when Severus gave an unintelligible snort.

“You're observant today, Lupin. I didn't notice that I was alive.” He honestly didn't know what to think of the thought, of the fact, that he was alive. Was he mad at Remus? He wasn't sure, he was already confused as it was.

“I'm always observant when it comes down to you. I like looking at you,” Remus said with a grin so wide that it made Severus grimace. Not only that, but the cheesy confession made him shudder in an unfamiliar way. He found it hard to believe him but kept quiet. He looked down the moment

Remus glanced at something else while speaking, telling him about all the things he missed. He sighed heavily as he noticed the scar and after about a minute, he realized Remus stopped talking some time ago. Tears started to prickle in Severus' eyes. He knew Remus didn't want him anymore. Now he was even more ugly and scared, vulnerable and absolutely weak for doing it.

What he didn't expect was Remus' lack of words. Instead, he pushed himself up from the chair and made a gesture for Severus to scoot over to make room for him, which he did.

"Good boy," Remus whispered as a joke. Severus' cheeks got red and Remus had a knowing grin on his face. He sat himself down on the edge, then lifted up his legs and stretched them in front of him and laid down. Severus, who was still in his sitting position, followed him quietly and laid down as well. It was quiet for some time and he sniffed away another tear. What would his father think of him? He forced himself to take a shuddering breath but it didn't help and more tears rushed out.

The blankets rustled and Remus wrapped his arms around the fragile body with care, moved Severus lightly until his head was on his chest. It was an intimate position and Severus felt self-conscious of the way he was lying but his worries sort of disappeared when Remus stroked his hair.

"You know, I was completely wrong about you. I had never known how risk-taking you were before I started to get to know you. It's not always in a bad way," Remus rushed out when Severus opened his mouth to start an argument, "It can be a lot of fun. You're brave enough to do things others won't. But with that braveness comes a lot of doubt that you try to hide, even from yourself. You have no reason to doubt. I know that's hard to believe and it's hard to let go of that habit after it's been imprinted on you. But that's why I'm here. I want to show you how perfect you are." His speech didn't turn out the way he wanted but he let it be. Severus smirked softly against his chest.

"that's quite inspirational, Remus. Thank you for that." But he had listened to the words Remus tried to form, the message it created. He also had to admit he was right, although sometimes his mind said differently.

Remus laughed, his chest heaving up and down and his shoulders shaking. It was a deep laugh, coming from his stomach.

"You fucker. I love you." He pecked a kiss on Severus' cheek before guiding the head on his chest again.

Two days went by with Remus constantly hovering around the hospital wing. He originally had classes, but he skipped most of them to be around Severus and eventually, Dumbledore just gave him a week to "recover" from the tragedy. Remus brought books and homework that Severus demanded. He gave him the copy of The Picture of Dorian Gray and Severus read it with Remus' personal notes. They sat with each other one night, cuddled against each other on the narrow bed and hoped Pomfrey wasn't coming in.

"that's rubbish. I always thought Dorian knew." Severus shook his head in amusement at what Remus was saying.

"Absolutely not. Basil loved Dorian, and Dorian was a self-absorbed prat who took up stupid advice of Henry." Remus' eyebrows shot up to his hairline. He hadn't thought of that. Actually, he hadn't thought a lot during reading it as he lost his concentration halfway through but he never told Severus that.

"Well...if you put it that way." They kept their conversations interesting, avoiding any harsh

topics about what it might be like when Severus got released from the hospital. They did, however, broach the subject about the night on the Astronomy Tower. There was a lot of crying coming with it. They cleared the air, cleared everything that happened. Remus had promised to do better and Severus promised not to hide his secrets. There was just one night left before Severus was released. Remus visited again and wanted to make a special night out of it.

## Chapter thirty three

Remus arrived at the Hospital Wing. He didn't even bother trying to find Pomfrey to ask her if he could see Severus, he already knew because he was granted permission to do so. One night, he reminded himself. One night and Severus gets released. He grinned as he abruptly opened the curtains. Severus yelped and quickly draped his book over his lap, then glared at Remus.

"Oh, is my adorable boyfriend scared?" Severus huffed in annoyance and wrapped his arms around his waist. To Remus' surprise, the boy was actually blushing near red.

"Are you alright? You look a bit flushed." He glared harder and shrugged his shoulders. That's when Remus knew he'd done something.

"Did I do something wrong?" He asked in a gentle tone.

"No," Severus said, voice cracking in the middle which was unlike him, "can you please....just-return later? I, er-" He shot him a knowing look, but Remus didn't understand what he was trying to say.

"I know I came a bit earlier than expected but do I really need to go? You don't have anything to do anyway," He countered back. Why did Severus have such trouble with him being there all of the sudden? He ignored the protests and sat down on the edge of the bed, extending his hand to pluck the book he was reading. The cover was entirely black as if glamour was applied to it. Just when he was about to remove the book from his lap, Severus quickly held it in place with all the strength he had.

"No!" He shrieked. Remus' eyes went wide at the quick temper.

"Darling. What's wrong? I just want to know what you're reading." Severus still held the iron grip on the book. It was quiet for over a minute, both frozen in place and Severus shifting in his place. Eventually, Severus forgot to keep it tight and Remus grabbed it as fast as he could. Severus was too slow to notice and Remus gasped. Right where his eyes were, looking at Severus' lap with a large bulge that could be nothing else than an erection. Severus appeared mortified and hid his face in his hands.

"Fuck, Remus. Don't do that." It was hard to understand but Remus figured out the words fast enough as Severus drew up his knees to his chest to hide his erection.

"Was the book that interesting?" He said nothing so Remus removed the glamour, smirking as he saw the cover of two naked men.

"Oh?" He raised an eyebrow even though the Slytherin couldn't see it, "How naughty. didn't know you liked this, Sev." He was amazed at the red blush worsening and he snickered lightly as Severus continued to mumble unintelligently. He knew it was a bold move, but he absolutely couldn't help himself when he set down the book and leaned forward, supporting himself with his hands and half hovering above Severus. He got close enough for his untamable hair to brush against Severus' temple who was visibly shaking from anticipation. Remus brought his lips next to his right ear, breath ghosting over the shell and chuckling softly.

"You like this as well? Sev, is it possible that our innocent Slytherin wants more?" Severus stayed quiet although he slowly lowered his legs again, seemingly less shy with Remus acting this way. It was when Remus made the next move, his hand on Severus' chest, fingers splayed and slowly

caressing that his breath hitched.

“Remus,” Severus growled as a warning. Remus made circles with his fingers and gently pushed on his chest. He gladly obeyed and let himself be pushed down with his back on the mattress by Remus.

“If at any point you want to stop, just say so,” He whispered. Remus watched emotions cross Severus’ face. Confusion at first but it slowly went over to the look he gave when figuring something out and his lips parted to let out a small; ‘oh’. Remus smiled and softly nibbled his earlobe, causing Severus’ body to let out a jerk.

“Sensitive there?” Severus responded with a grunt, urging him to go faster by clasping his hands together at the back of Remus’ neck and pulling him closer. Remus felt himself getting hard and it strained against the tight fabric of his trousers. He wanted to get rid of them immediately. He had never felt this hot and bothered, never knew the sensations of making love to a person he deeply cared for. Who would’ve guessed it’d be Severus? He wanted to explore his body, know where every dip was, where his sensitive spots were and what turned him on.

If he had to be honest, at first he never thought about the possibility of him having sex. He didn’t even know the basics of how to have sex with a bloke. But in the time he was still denying his obvious feelings for Severus, he started to borrow books from the library in the restricted section. He remembered telling himself that this was for pure research, not because he liked Severus.

It was more complicated than he expected when he read the information about it but he quickly understood the concept of it. He smirked as he thought about Sirius’ face when he’d find him reading these books and the notes he took of it.

Now, he was doing the exact thing he read about, dreamed about. He felt Severus squirming underneath his body, felt an erection poke against his thigh. He shifted his leg until it was between Severus’ legs and pushed up, the same way he did when they rutted against each other like animals against a wall that day. Severus let his head fall backwards and arched his back so much Remus wondered how he was so flexible. His nose was scrunched up and Remus gave one more little push before pulling away, hearing Severus whine at the loss.

“How do you....you know- want to do this?” Severus whispered shyly, surprising Remus that he dared to ask the thing he dreaded to ask.

“Er- Well, I don’t really have a preference.” He did, but he didn’t dare to say it aloud. Suddenly they were both quiet since they had never gone this far with one another. Everything was new, and Remus felt his face heat up.

“I uh would like to try....If we’re going to copulate I’d prefer to be penetrated.” Remus’ brows furrowed at the words he didn’t know. He repeated the sentence in the hope he wouldn’t look dumb in front of Severus, who took him out of his mind with an irritated sigh.

“For fucks sake. I want to be the fucking bottom while you fuck me, Lupin. Does your dense brain understand those words?” Remus’ eyes went wide at how straightforward he was but he guessed it was his fault for not knowing what he was saying. He opened his mouth to respond without actually having any words. He was grateful when Severus rolled his eyes and pulled him down by his neck, kissing him deeply.

He panted against the heated lips and sat up a bit on his knees over Severus’ thighs and bent forward so he wouldn’t break the kiss.

“You okay with this?” He breathed. Severus nodded frantically, letting out a whine and bucking his hips in desperation. Remus took that as a sign to continue and let his hands roam over his chest until they found the hem of his shirt. Meanwhile, he moved his head to give open-mouth kisses against Severus’ defined jaw, then to his neck and collarbone to find another sensitive spot. Severus twisted the hair that he grabbed in his hands when Remus found another spot and started sucking and licking over it.

Remus couldn’t believe this was happening, that he was about to make love to him. He pulled the shirt over his head, careful to avoid the fabric sliding over the wrists. He took a moment to appreciate what was in front of him, eyes wide with desire. His pink nipples stood up in peaks, he had a bit of curly chest hair but not much. His ribs were visible through his thin skin, especially while lying down, and more hair surrounded his navel. Severus squirmed around in the bed and loosened his grip from Remus’ hair to wrap his arms over his torso, the tip of his ears pink.

“Stop.” Remus took both of his hands and pinned them next to Severus’ head and drew his knees more together to trap Severus between them.

“Have I ever told you how beautiful you are?”

“Multiple times. You’re not too bad yourself.” Severus smiled amused. Remus faked a pained gasp and moved Severus’ hands so that they were trapped in one of Remus’ bigger ones so that one hand was free. He let himself rub Severus’ nipple with his palm with an innocent expression.

“I think I’m breathtaking.” Severus attempted to laugh but it turned into an embarrassing moan when suddenly his nipple was taken in a hot mouth. He’d never touched his nipples himself, thinking it was only a pleasure for girls and not for boys. He rethought this conclusion when Remus swirled his tongue around the nipple and then bit gently, sending electric shocks through his body.

“You-” He tried to choke out, “take your shirt off, now.” Remus let go of his nipple with an obscene plop after one last suck and quickly disposed of his own shirt. Severus gasped and Remus felt pride. Quidditch with the Marauders certainly paid off in many different ways. One of them was the firm muscles he built over time. Not that much, not Sirius’ abs or James’ biceps, but more in having the broad shoulders and being less lanky than first-year him.

“Fucking hell, Lupin. If I knew what you were hiding under your robes then-” He couldn’t finish his sentence as Remus interrupted him with a kiss on his mouth.

“Then what, you’d consider fucking earlier?”

“Exactly.” Remus hummed in approval and shifted his arse to feel the erection underneath him twitch. Just because he liked to tease the gasping Slytherin, he began to rock his hips and ground down on Severus who was jerking and bucking as if he had no control.

“I’m going to suck you now.” It was weird to make the statement, but he wanted to make sure Severus wanted this, that he wasn’t taking advantage and that Severus was comfortable with him. Fortunately, he nodded again. Remus removed both of their trousers and soon removed Severus’ boxers as well without taking off his own. He stared for what felt like hours and snapped back in reality when Severus began to draw up his legs to hide himself. Remus tutted in disapproval and grabbed his thighs firmly, digging his fingernails in the milky flesh and lowering them.

It wasn’t as expected and Severus probably felt embarrassed, but Remus loved it. Dark hair dusted his legs, mostly his calves. Remus had to admit he imagined what Severus looked like under all those robes and layers. It was the rush that went through him when he realized that he was the only one who knew what Severus looked like. He was the only one who knew that Severus wasn’t that

scrawny as people said he was. In fact, his legs were quite the opposite. It was mostly the big thighs that he noticed first. Remus couldn't resist squeezing them and seeing the dips it created by his fingers.

Secondly, Remus had never seen a hard cock except for his own. He rarely sneaked a glance at his mates during showering but this wasn't like his own. It was standing completely straight in the air, shiny from precum everywhere and an angry vein pulsing over its length.

"May I?" He asked without taking his eyes off Severus' cock. Severus cleared his throat awkwardly before answering with a soft yes. Remus looked up at his eyes and smiled before experimentally licking the head. It left a weird aftertaste on his tongue but it quickly became addicting when he started to give more kitten licks. Eventually, he took the entire head in his mouth and sucked, hollowing his cheeks.

He actually had to hold Severus' done with his hands on his hips because else he'd push his entire cock in his mouth to seek the wetness. He soon learned how to relax his throat and took more in his mouth, bobbing his head at a slow pace to prevent gagging. His own erection was still straining in his boxers and he was literally humping the hospital bed to find some relief.

Severus trashed around, not knowing whether to get away or to get closer to Remus. His hands shot in Remus' head and urged him to go faster and take him deeper. Remus tried to keep up, tears in his eyes as he was pushed down. He didn't care, though. He loved it, every second of it.

"Fuck, Remus. Touch my balls," He screamed. Remus would be amused by this confession if he wasn't so busy sucking cock and so he obeyed without second thoughts. His hand cupped his sack and then the other one as if weighing them. Then he rolled them in his palm and gave them a few tugs.

Severus was moaning loudly and Remus briefly thought whether they had a silencing spell around them but these thoughts disappeared when Severus suddenly started to pull Remus off from his cock.

"Shit, Remus. Stop, I'm going to come," He tried to warn him but Remus was having none of it and merely started to suck harder. He got the last warning that he was going to come when hot cum was shot in his mouth. He tried to swallow it all but it was too hard for his first time and most of it started to dribble out of the corners of his mouth. He continued licking until Severus was completely spent and his cock entirely flaccid. Remus pulled off and grinned down at Severus who was panting harshly. He hadn't expected Severus to want to go further since he'd already come so it surprised him what Severus asked next.

"Will you fuck me now?" Remus smiled wider and nodded. He stepped out of his boxers and threw them in the corner of the room without any thought. He wasn't shy about his body, a bit self-conscious but that was all. Severus' mouth hung open and his eyes darted down at Remus' hard cock.

"The fuck is that," He yelped.

"Ouch," Remus said, confusion spreading over his face. Severus didn't say anything but his cock was twitching against his thigh, ready for more and slowly growing hard again. Being a teenager could do wonders.

"No, I mean- Jesus. That's going to hurt," He muttered, averting his eyes and glowing red once more. Remus chuckled and gave a peck on his cheek.

“Don’t worry. I’ll make sure to prepare you properly.” He summoned the lube and it flew in his hand, earning an impressed expression from Severus.

“Spread your legs.” It took a while for them to figure out a position so that Remus could easily reach him. It was awkward, that could be said for sure. His erection was flagging and so was Severus’ when they fumbled around. Eventually, Severus was on his back again and Remus pushed his legs against his chest and his ankles over Remus’ shoulders. It also took an embarrassingly long time for Remus to open the cap of the lube so he gave it to Severus who opened it with his fucking teeth and spat it out with an annoyed look.

Remus dipped his index finger in the liquid and reached down between their bodies. He took his time, stopping at Severus’ balls to tickle the sensitive, wrinkled skin. He thought back to those books that explained how to properly prepare your partner. He whispered a spell intended on cleaning someone’s insides and Severus jerked but didn’t say anything. His finger finally found the entrance and he circled the rim a few times before placing the tip of his finger in front of it. He kissed Severus’ stomach and waited until he felt him relax and pushed in. Severus moaned at the uncomfortable feeling.

“Want me to stop?” Remus asked, but Severus shook his head and rocked his hips to get the finger to drive into him. Remus pulled out and pushed in a bit more this time. It was weird how he felt Severus clenching around his digit, how tight it was and how wet his finger felt. He loosened him up enough until he carefully added a second finger. Then a third and now he was fully hard again, just like Severus. It was then that he crooked his fingers and hit the bump he was searching for. Severus bucked his hips and grunted. He didn’t ask what that feeling was, he didn’t care as long as Remus kept hitting it.

“Fuck, Sev. I think you’re ready.” He pulled out his fingers and watched the rim trying to close itself again. He manoeuvred Severus’ legs higher until Severus said he wanted to stop.

“Stop, no. I- I want to ride you.” Remus swallowed thickly, imagining the vulgar picture it’d make and they quickly changed positions. Severus climbed over him, one hand on his chest and the other reaching behind him to steady Remus’ cock. It took a couple of tries before Remus felt the head of his cock being pushed against the opening. His eyelids fluttered and he moaned deeply as Severus took his time to seat himself.

Remus finally dared to open his eyes when Severus sat and wriggled around and his cock resting upon Remus’ stomach. Words couldn’t describe the heat that surrounded him. It couldn’t describe how Severus rocked his hips back and forth and how Remus dug his fingernails in the soft skin of his thighs. How he bucked his hips to meet Severus’ thrusts, how he watched as Severus impaled himself over and over again.

He was sweating all over, his cock on the edge and it didn’t help that Severus was openly grunting and moaning. They didn’t exchange any words, it wasn’t needed. Remus’ only thoughts were that he had Severus right now.

The thrusts quickly became irregular and harder. He could barely tell Severus that he was about to come and he was already coming. Severus was bouncing on his erection, Severus clenching around his cock and spurting his own cum over Remus’ stomach and chest.

His bones felt like jelly and he let himself be caught by Remus’ arms. They didn’t move so Remus’ soft cock stayed inside Severus. They took a moment to catch their breath and just when they were about to move, to clean everything up, they heard the curtain being pulled back. They stared at each other in horror. Remus knew it may look bad for anyone coming in right now. Severus’ cum was between them and rubbed over their chests, they were naked and Remus had his fucking cock

buried inside Severus. Severus pushed himself in a sitting position as fast as he could and was about to pull out when the person already came in.

They were both frozen as they looked at Pomfrey who dropped the tray of food and yelped, quickly pulling back the curtain and letting the food spread over the ground.

“Fuck,” Severus whispered and then lifted himself and listened to the squelching sound it made in the silent room as Remus popped out.

## Chapter thirty four

Severus slipped in his robes with an awkward tension hanging in the air. Pomfrey had waited behind the curtains after demanding the two of them to get dressed. They still weren't over the fact that they were walked in the first time they had sex.

"At least it will be memorable, something to tell your children later," Remus tried to joke to ease the tension. Severus' lip curled up in amusement.

"Shut it." He straightened his back and pulled back his shoulders. Remus was sitting on the edge of the bed, feet dangling off the edge. He was a lot quicker with dressing but perhaps it was because Severus was too busy ogling his body while he was busy getting dressed. It was when Remus caught him staring at his arse that Severus mumbled an apology and finally started to put on his clothing. Remus had laughed and kissed him but they had to break apart when Pomfrey yelled that they needed to get ready from the other side of the curtain. Again, they forgot she was there.

"Is it safe to come in now?" Pomfrey asked with a tone they couldn't quite place.

"Yes." She pulled back the curtain for the second time and her face was beet red. She waved her wand and the food on the ground disappeared.

"I wanted to inform Mr Snape here that he's released from the hospital." She drew Severus' name while looking at Remus with a glare.

"But there are some things you need to do if you want to be released. It's very important that you take these potions—" She babbled but Remus stopped listening and jumped off the bed when Pomfrey gestured him to. Severus hummed every now and then, shifting on his feet and his face growing redder with each second. Remus could barely hold in his laughter when Pomfrey was about to touch the beddings of the mattress when she suddenly grimaced and used magic to send it to the house-elves to clean.

They were released and walked hand in hand through the corridors. Remus wasn't afraid anymore of what anyone had to say. People were staring, some were making fun of them behind their back and some were boldly walking up to them to state they didn't approve of their 'faggoty relationship'. Remus wondered whether that was an actual word.

He had to admit he was scared to see his friends after that, now that Severus was finally free to roam the castle and not be stuck in that room all day. Severus didn't have to attend the class for another day so Remus went alone, but the Slytherin did walk with him to his first class.

"I'm grateful for you being here," Remus said when they were turning the corner of the last corridor to Transfiguration. Severus shrugged his shoulders and his eyes were cast down to the floor. He had a bit more trouble with how public their relationship was, but he was also the one that was getting more harassed. When they finally arrived at Transfiguration, Remus leaned into him, cupping his cheek and gave him a kiss on the lips. People made comments about it but he continued to ignore them.

Needless to say, Sirius was shocked at how serious Remus was about it. He didn't fully accept it until the following day. It was when it was evening and they were all in bed already. The lights

were still on and they were talking about literally anything that came up. Remus was dressed in his pyjamas like everyone else, laughing when James made another comment about something and Sirius disagreeing with him. Peter snorted every now and then.

That was when there was a knock on the door of their dorm. He exchanged a look with the other Marauders and when no one stood up to open the door, he sighed and walked to the door to open it himself. He was surprised when he saw Severus standing there. He didn't ask how he got into the Gryffindor common room, he was too concerned to ask when Severus was crying.

"Fuck, Darling, what happened?" The Marauders were completely silent as they heard Severus sobbing and crying.

"Come in." Remus wrapped an arm around his waist and shut the door behind him, then led Severus to the edge of his own bed for him to sit down. He was grateful that no one, even Sirius, made a comment about Severus. Severus' eyes were red from crying, his body was shaking and he had multiple cuts and bruises on his face. What worried him more was what Severus was wearing. He lost his shirt and his pyjama pants were torn and ragged. They were all quiet when they saw the bruises around his neck and wrists and even the cut going over his chest. Severus said nothing and nuzzled his less pained cheek against Remus' chest who wrapped his arms around him. That's when James began to move.

"I'll get some ice and er....bandages I guess."

"I'll come with you," Peter said, scrambling from his bed and quickly following James out of the dorms. Remus glanced at Sirius as he held Severus against his chest. Sirius said nothing as he stood up and rummaged through his bags. Remus was clueless about what he was doing and didn't want to ask him while Severus was completely beaten up and crying in his arms. He nearly cried when Sirius walked over to them with a fresh pair of pyjamas and crouched down next to them to look Severus in the eye who was hiding in Remus' chest. He held out the bundle of clothing and Severus took it, nodding his head.

That was when Sirius started to change his mind about their relationship. James already accepted it and Peter was coming around as well. Of course, they told Pomfrey about what happened in the Slytherin common room and for the first time, they had proof of it. Apparently, Severus was approached by Lucius and his other friends when he was crawling into his bed to sleep. They had insulted him and 'shown' him some real 'manners'. Severus managed to escape and ran to the Gryffindors without thinking about his state. He was allowed to sleep in the Gryffindor dorms and Slughorn had to supervise the Slytherins, although Remus was sure he wasn't because he didn't give a shit.

But as long as Severus was with him, as long as he was getting better, breaking out of old habits, it was going to be fine. The Marauders were still with him and they supported him, they treated Severus as if he was part of the pack. He couldn't feel more cared for and loved for.

The Slytherin boy, Severus, looked at the stars in the bright night to enjoy his last moments in peace after the incident with Lily when he suddenly heard someone. Remus stopped him before it was too late. This leads to many encounters on the Astronomy Tower where it all happened.

Remus noticed something weird when Severus had the habit of holding his left arm close to his chest, the side where the Dark Mark was usually printed. Were the rumours true and did Severus join the Death Eaters? Dumbledore gives Remus the assignment to spy on him while slowly developing feelings for him. What happens when they find themselves falling for each other and how will Remus complete the task?

